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QUEEN ADELAIDE



QUEEN ADELAIDE, 1830

From the painting by Sir William Beechey in the National Portrait Gallery

QUEEN ADELAIDE

By MARY HOPKIRK

JOHN MURRAY
ALBEMARLE STREET
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FOREWORD

I acknowledge my indebtedness :

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Creevey's Life and Times, John Gore.

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The quotation on pages 63 and 64 is taken from *Royal Yachts*, by C. M. Gavin. Rich and Cowan.

MARY HOPKIRK

DANBURY, ESSEX

January, 1946

TO MY MOTHER

Chapter 1: *THE CATASTROPHE AT CLAREMONT, 1817*

"As it is the will of Divine Providence, His Royal Highness is in duty bound to submit to the decree of Heaven," pontificated the Regent's *Court Circular* a trifle incongruously on November 7th, 1817. The Prince of Wales was not as a rule accustomed to submit to the decrees of Heaven, nor were his actions usually prompted by considerations of duty; but on this occasion the English Royal family had sustained a shattering blow. The Princess Charlotte, future sovereign of Great Britain, had died at the age of twenty, after giving birth to a dead son.

Although the buxom, jolly princess, with prominent pale-blue eyes and a kind heart, had until her marriage been kept in seclusion by her jealous father, her rare public appearances had been marked with success. When visiting a man-of-war at Weymouth, she had insisted upon climbing up the ship's side by a rope ladder, while the chair which had been prepared for her use was let down instead for her ladies-in-waiting and the Bishop of Salisbury—thereby delighting the sailors. On another occasion she had escaped from Warwick House, where her father had immured her, and taken a hackney carriage to visit her ostracised mother at Connaught Place. This kind of tomboyish behaviour had endeared her to her future subjects; and that she was believed to have been ill-treated by her grandmother, Queen Charlotte, who was disliked, and that she had chosen her husband in defiance of the wishes of her father (who preferred the Prince of Orange), who was even more disliked, only tended to increase her popularity.

When, on a May evening in 1816, she had married "the best of all husbands," Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, for whom she bore "an amount of love, the greatness of which can only be compared with the English National Debt," the prospect was indeed pleasing. The bridegroom was handsome and intelligent, with a highly developed sense of decency and responsibility—qualities

in which most of his in-laws were conspicuously lacking; the bride was gay and charitable. And the loving couple had a flair for doing the right thing. They paid their tradesmen regularly, which the other members of the Royal family never thought of doing; and on their birthdays, instead of gorging their relations, they gave dinners to the poor. Should this marriage turn out successfully, England felt assured of a respectable Court, a kind Queen, a wise, if rather smug, Prince Consort, and a family of robust, good-looking, and well brought-up little princes and princesses to succeed them. After the gloomy or scandalous Courts to which people had become accustomed, this was indeed welcome.

By August 1817 London stockbrokers were betting considerable sums on the sex of an eagerly expected heir; and the eyes of all England turned to the Princess's Surrey home, which she had received as a wedding-present from the British Government.

Claremont, a stately brick and stone mansion with a fine oval hall and magnificent classical portico, had been built by Lord Clive with the fortune he had amassed in India; and, despite its lovely situation and fine façade, something of the nabob's ill-health and bitterness of spirit seemed to linger there. It was a house of ill-omen.

There was nothing sinister, however, about the Princess's furnishing. Mme. de Boigne was invited to see her bedroom. The curtains of her large four-poster "hung straight down without loops, fringes or ornamentation; they were of flowered chintz lined with pink cambric. There was no superfluous luxury in this room, where the duplicate furniture, intended rather for use than ornament, displayed the intimacy of marriage according to the custom of the country."

Considering the magnitude of the occasion, the preparations made for the happy event would appear inadequate nowadays. Charlotte's mother, the Princess of Wales, was abroad—through no fault of her own, certainly; and had she been present, she was unlikely to have proved very helpful. Queen Charlotte and her daughters, having been intentionally misled with regard to the date by the Princess, who did not wish them to attend, were taking the waters at Bath; and the Prince of Wales was visiting his mis-

tress, Lady Hertford, at Sudbourne Hall in Suffolk and enjoying the oysters of Orford. Claremont was rather isolated, especially in November, when the roads were bad and the Thames valley invariably foggy; but Charlotte had refused to be confined at Marlborough House, her London home; and Dr. Baillie, her physician-in-ordinary, Sir Richard Croft, the accoucheur, and Mrs. Griffiths, the nurse, were unquestionably at the head of their profession.

At first all went well. "Nothing can be going on better," said Sir Richard at half-past five on the evening of November 4th; but by ten that night it became clear that the baby was in no hurry to become a member of the House of Hanover. Croft, convinced that surgical aid was necessary, dared not operate without the Regent's sanction; and as Claremont is 108 miles from Sudbourne, it was clearly impossible to obtain the required permission in time. Considering that anæsthetics, antiseptics and X-rays were as yet unknown, he cannot be blamed for his unwillingness to take the risk involved.

On the evening of Guy Fawkes' Day they were obliged to tell Charlotte that her forty-eight hours' labour had been in vain, and that her son was dead. Despite the bitter disappointment, she said wearily, "I hope we may be more fortunate another time," and appeared to rally. That night, satisfied that all was well, the doctors rashly retired to bed and persuaded the Prince to do likewise, leaving their patient in the care of the midwife. At two next morning the exhausted girl suddenly collapsed; and Leopold was awakened by the nurse only to find that he had been summoned too late. Tired, scared and in great pain, Charlotte had slipped away in the darkness, leaving her ambitious husband a prince without any future, and bequeathing to England a future without any prince.

"May God grant that neither you nor any connected with you may suffer what I do at this moment," wrote Sir Richard Croft to a friend next day; and three months later, while in charge of a similar case, he committed suicide.

Regency England reeled under the blow. Though a post-mortem disclosed that in any case the Princess would have been neither

long-lived nor healthy, and although a letter which she wrote to her mother in October reveals a premonition that she would die in childbed, nobody had imagined it possible that the apparently vital and bouncing Charlotte would not survive the happiest of many happy events. So amazed were the public, that it was even rumoured that she had been deliberately poisoned by the Queen with the Regent's connivance. In view of the dynastic position of the House of Hanover at the time, such an accusation against either Queen Charlotte or her son was clearly preposterous; though it was generally remarked that neither seemed unduly distressed.

Consideration of the heirs-presumptive provided the disloyal with a grim joke; for the loyal the prospect was tragic.

King George III was old, blind and very mad, had been declared incapable of ruling, and was in a padded cell at Windsor.

His eldest son George, the Prince Regent, was decaying rapidly after much riotous and discreditable living. Charlotte was his only child; and after a twenty years' separation and much mutual recrimination, any reconciliation with his wild wife was out of the question. Caroline, Princess of Wales, showed no indication of dying; and although her incredibly stupid behaviour seemed to afford her husband ample evidence for divorce, it was doubtful whether, in view of the treatment afforded not only to Caroline herself but also to Maria Fitzherbert, his greatly wronged first wife (who, incidentally, was still alive), any sane princess would be willing to marry him. In short, the chances of the Prince Regent providing himself with further legitimate offspring were exceedingly remote.

Frederick, Duke of York and Secular Bishop of Osnaburg, was fifty-four, and had lived neither wisely nor well. After twenty-six years of childless and unhappy married life, his Prussian Duchess had become inoculated to his second-rate infidelities, and lavished her frustrated maternal affection on her amazing collection of forty little dogs.

Unlike his two elder brothers, William Henry, Duke of Clarence, was far from being childless; but unfortunately he was unmarried, and the ten little Fitzclarences could not be regarded as relevant to the succession. Six years before, for combined dynastic

and financial reasons, he had parted from their handsome and flamboyant actress-mother, Mrs. Jordan, and had since made several efforts to marry; which had been frustrated, either by the Regent, who considered the ladies concerned impossible, or by the ladies themselves, who considered William Henry impossible. He was past middle-age, and if he were expected to provide England with a properly accredited heir, clearly something must be done about it without delay.

Edward, Duke of Kent, the King's fourth son, had been living openly and domestically for twenty-seven years with a Canadian lady who rejoiced in the rather nebulous title of Mme. de St. Laurent—she had as much right to be known as Mrs. Montreal or Signora Saskatchewan; and as the Duke held the view that “she is of very good family, has never been an actress and I am the first and only person who ever lived with her” it seemed as if it would require considerable pressure to persuade him to give her notice.

The fifth brother, Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, was universally feared and detested. He had been married for two years to his cousin, Princess Frederica of Mecklenburg, whose virtue was doubted and who was generally credited with the murder of one of her former husbands. Married at fifteen to the King of Prussia's son, she bore him two children in eighteen months, and by the time she was twenty had divorced him and married the Prince of Solms (for whom she jilted the Duke of Cambridge). Though she provided him with four children, he was in the act of divorcing her when he obligingly died unexpectedly. She thereupon married Cumberland; and while nobody regretted that she was forty and her third marriage, so far, childless, everyone hoped that she would soon murder him also.

Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex, the sixth of George III's sons, was regarded as a sort of buffoon. In his extreme youth he had married Lady Augusta Murray without his father's consent; and although the wedding had taken place twice over, first in Rome and then in St. George's, Hanover Square, the King declared it to be null and void under the Royal Marriage Act. Although after six years the Duke had become bored with Lady Augusta, she had

borne him two children, and he very decently refused to marry anybody else during her lifetime.

Only in the person of the youngest brother, Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, who was forty-three and as yet unmarried, did there appear any solution to the problem.

Of the King's five surviving daughters, two were married but childless, two not childless but unmarried, and one unwed and childless but forty-nine years old.

Indeed, none of the heirs-presumptive appeared at all promising as parents of a future Sovereign.

Should George III have no grandchild, the Crown would pass to the Duke of Brunswick, a boy of fifteen believed to be dotty; and if the Princess of Wales, who was his aunt, was at all typical of his other relatives, this would undoubtedly mean a revolution, possibly a republic.

Although the English people lacked enthusiasm for the House of Hanover, they were determined that any such upheaval must be avoided at all costs.

Chapter 2 : ADELAIDE THE AQUIESCENT, 1818

It is generally stated that the three unmarried sons of George III had not contemplated matrimony until forced to do so by the death of the Princess Charlotte. Actually all three had been investigating possible brides for at least two years; but undoubtedly the now urgent necessity to provide for the succession crystallised their intentions. Fortunately for the future greatness of the British Crown, both the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of Kent were considerably embarrassed financially; and the Government was able to hold out the promise of a monetary *douceur* as a spur to their dynastic obligations.

Only three years before, Kent had written to a mutual friend in Canada about his "old French lady" (as his brothers called her): "What our life was beside you, that it has continued during the twenty years that have passed since we left, and I love to think that twenty years hence it may be the same"; but in November 1816 he recollected that a Spanish gypsy had once told him he would be the father of a great queen, and as Alphonsine Thérèse Bernadine Julie de Mongeret de St. Laurent appeared to be out of place in such a scheme, he had obtained from the Tzar a loan of £1,000 to pay the expenses of a journey to Baden to inspect a likely princess.

He now announced his preparedness to take a wife for £30,000 a year and £12,000 down; and, without first ascertaining whether Parliament was likely to hand out this sum, he left Brussels, where he was living to evade the importunity of his creditors, and set out to tour Europe in search of an appropriate princess. Mme. de St Laurent was persuaded to withdraw into a French convent.

Clarence now announced his inability to take the plunge for so small a sum. As he had ten children to feed, clothe and educate and was in debt to the extent of £56,000, he said he must have at least £40,000 a year and £20,000 down. He also asked for a Town house and expected that Bushey be "completely repaired and entirely new furnished." Having been mistaken so many

times before in matters matrimonial, he very wisely placed the whole matter in the hands of his mother.

To find three brides (for the Duke of Cambridge wanted one also) was no easy task.

By the Act of Settlement of 1689 they must be non-Catholics; and by the Royal Marriage Act of 1772 they must be approved by the Sovereign, which at that time meant that no commoners need apply. There were no suitable English princesses; and the lovelies of France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Poland, Italy and half Germany were excluded on religious grounds. Norway, Belgium and the Balkan States were not in existence as such; the Swedish royal house, being that of Bernadotte, Napoleon's general, was not acceptable two years after the Battle of Waterloo. This left only Holland, Denmark, Russia and the Protestant half of Germany in which to conduct investigations. Geographically speaking, therefore, the choice was very limited.

For the purpose Queen Charlotte had in view, the princesses must be well under forty; and yet, bearing in mind the ages and personalities of the bridegrooms, it were as well that they should not be unduly young and intolerant. Everyone knew what had happened to poor, inexperienced, optimistic Caroline.

It was also essential that the brides should be of the greatest respectability; nobody wanted another Duchess of Cumberland.

Even should likely ladies be discovered, they would next have to be induced to marry the proposed *partis*; and this was not going to be easy, either.

Of the two elder, the Duke of Kent was, on paper anyway, the least ineligible. He was younger, according to contemporary taste better looking, and had no children; on the other hand he was heavily in debt, and nobody could tell how long Mme. de St Laurent might be content to remain in her convent.

Clarence was fifty-three, with a head shaped like a pineapple. He drank and swore more than was customary (which was saying a good deal) and at times behaved like a buffoon. The Russian Ambassador's wife seriously believed him to be insane. Four years earlier she had written home that he "was the least educated of all the English princes. He had no knowledge, vulgar English habits

and manners, his conversation was also vulgar." That the majority of English people were not concerned with education and that they preferred vulgar native habits and manners to refined Continental ones, did not occur to her. His naval career undoubtedly had been far from brilliant, and he was considered at the Admiralty to be a bad officer. There were several regrettable episodes of an amorous nature in his past, culminating in his twenty years' liaison with Dorothea Jordan, by whom he was generally supposed to have been kept. Although this lady was ostensibly dead and buried in France, and her personal effects, including her lingerie, had been publicly auctioned to pay for her funeral, there were plenty of rumours to the effect that she was not dead at all, but living secretly in London. In any case, their ten children were living with him at his not over-large official abode in Bushey Park. He had only obtained his Dukedom by threatening to stand for Parliament for Totnes if his father withheld it. He was in the profoundest debt, was known to detest all foreigners and had recently been turned down by two English commoners and a Russian princess.

In fact, poor William Henry was about as ineligible as could be.

As early as November 1815 he had considered the possibility of marrying his forty-two-year-old cousin, Princess Sophia of Gloucester; but when he discovered that no child of this lady (whose mother was a commoner) could reign in Hanover, and as he never envisaged the possibility of becoming King of England, he eventually decided against her.

"Under these circumstances" (he wrote to the Regent), "I cannot see any advantage in marrying Princess Sophia . . . I shall, however, be ready to set out for the Continent the moment you please, as I have not any doubt that the eldest daughter of Landgrave Frederick of Hesse is a lady in every respect fit for my wife provided pecuniary matters can be arranged and the lady's consent is obtained."

But the lady's consent was not forthcoming and she married the Duchess of Cumberland's brother instead.

Soon after Princess Charlotte's death, Clarence told his brother Cambridge, who was visiting Germany, "to keep an eye open for a likely bride for him in the course of his travels." From time to

time during the winter of 1817 Adolphus sent impartial reports of appropriate or inappropriate ladies, until, from the ducal castle of Hesse-Cassel he suddenly sent home a glowing description of a newly discovered beauty, the younger sister of the lady who had turned William down:

“The Princess Augusta” (he wrote to a friend) “would make an ideal Queen of England . . . and as my brother is a great deal more likely to reign than I ever am, I consider it to be my duty to the nation as well as to my brother, that he should have the first opportunity of making his advances.”

When Clarence received his brother’s letter, in which the lady’s charms were most fully praised, he was at first rather puzzled; and then he suddenly burst into roars of laughter, observing to his friends, “By Heavens! He’s in love with her himself. I’ll write and tell him to take her himself, bless him!” When it was again pointed out to him what a suitable Duchess of Clarence Augusta would make, he observed: “I’ll grant you Queens are not easy to find—especially for thrones like that of England. But it is easier to find a Queen than to find the one and only mate for any particular human being! So Adolphus has her—if she will have him!” And for their loyalty and generosity to each other, both brothers were afterwards plentifully rewarded.

In February 1818 Clarence heard of another lady. He wrote to his mother:

“Under all considerations the Princess of Dannemark is probably the most proper, provided her character is that which I should trust will bear investigation”;

and added:

“If that settlement is made which I can consider adequate I shall only have to explain my real situation as the fond and attached father of ten children to the Princess . . . for without a complete understanding of my full determination to see when and where I please my daughters, I cannot and will not marry.”

“As they are not to live under the same roof, I cannot see why, if the Princess is reasonable, she should object to see those chil-

dren," wrote the Queen to the Regent; but unfortunately the Princess did object, and declined the proposal.

Clarence felt very hurt; and within a day or two the Duchess of Gloucester wrote to the Regent that the Queen was "half-distracted as William had written to tell her that he had proposed and been accepted by Miss Wykeham." Miss Wykeham was an English heiress; and although the Regent and his mother tried hard to dissuade him, he insisted on sending a petition to the Cabinet, urging that as he was over twenty-five, the Royal Marriage Act allowed him to marry without the Sovereign's consent, provided Parliament had no objection. The Cabinet reinforced the Regent's refusal and William was obliged to withdraw. His request that Miss Wykeham should be given a peerage by way of compensation was also turned down.

The Duke of Cambridge then produced two more ladies who might consent; and Clarence allowed him to make an offer for the Princess Caroline of Hesse, a cousin of the future Duchess of Cambridge, with reversion to the Princess Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen should the first proposal be declined. Early in March the reply came from Hesse.

"Je dois observer . . . que tant la jeunesse de ma fille" (she was only 18) "que la constitution délicate, comme la nombreuse famille du Duc de Clarence avancé dans un âge mûr me fait espérer qu'il ne vienne pas de proposition de noce . . ."

wrote the lady's flustered father in bad French to the Duke of Cambridge, who, in forwarding it to the Regent, informed him "in consequence I have sent off this evening by a safe opportunity the letter to the Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen and I shall not fail to forward her answer the moment I receive it." Being seriously in love with his Augusta, and having been told that he was not to marry until his elder brothers were settled, Adolphus added:

"Far be it from me to wish to prevent William or any of my brothers from marrying, but really it is hard to make my marriage dependent upon theirs, especially when it appears that there is great difficulty in finding a bride for them. God knows what will

be the answer from Meiningen, but should it be unfavourable, I must entreat you again, my dearest brother, not to keep my marriage any longer back."

Happily, God *did* know what would be the answer from Meiningen—and it was favourable.

Amelia Adelaide Louisa Therèse Caroline was twenty-five, the eldest child of George, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen and Louisa Eleanora, his wife; and she had been born in August, which was regarded as an auspicious month for the House of Hanover.

Although his Duchy covered only 423 square miles, Duke George was a somewhat remarkable person, for he was the only sovereign prince in Europe with liberal and progressive ideas. When his mother died, he had her buried in the public cemetery, on the ground that "she was worthy to lie among her subjects"; and when his son and heir was baptised in 1800, it was the citizens of Meiningen, and no petty neighbouring ruler, who stood godfather. The little state rejoiced in a free press, never a normal characteristic of German rule at any time; and, in view of the fact that his reign coincided with the French revolutionary wars, in which the Saxon duchies suffered heavily, this in itself was remarkable.

The Duke patronised liberal-minded scholars and writers, who professed to find him stupid; but although he was boring he was benevolent, and his well-governed and contented subjects mourned him wholeheartedly when he died in 1803, leaving his young widow to act as regent for her toddling son, to deal with Napoleon and all the inconvenience of billeting, evacuees and epidemics associated with him, and to find appropriate husbands for her two daughters.

Louisa Eleanora acquitted herself well. The war swung backwards and forwards across the lilliputian state; but neither the French nor the Russian occupation succeeded in driving her from the great ducal castle. She economised; she bluffed a little; and after joining the Allies in 1813, saved the duchy for her little son.

Ida, her younger and prettier daughter, was in due course fittingly married in 1816 to Duke Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, who

was six foot four and large in proportion—Lady Brownlow described him as a “sort of Brobdingnag Cupid.” He was very poor, having only his pay as Governor of Ghent to live on; but the marriage had turned out happily, and the Duchess already had a baby daughter, Louise. The gentle stir made in German court circles by this successful marriage may have drawn the attention of Queen Charlotte to the elder sister, whom nobody outside Meiningen seems to have noticed before.

Amelia Adelaide had been endowed by Heaven with a quiet mind and a loving heart. She had inherited her father’s good sense, devotion to duty and interest in education, and in accordance with his wishes she had even learnt Greek. To her mother she owed exquisite manners, a sound understanding of the Lutheran virtues and devotion to simple living and good works; but as neither Heaven nor either parent had endowed her with beauty, importance or wealth, she had reached her twenty-sixth year before any suitable offer of marriage came her way—and when it did come it could hardly be considered romantic.

She had never seen Clarence; she could not have found his portrait reassuring; and she was well aware of the treatment afforded in England to the three German princesses who had already entered into unholy wedlock with George III’s sons. She undoubtedly knew all about his debts, his odd relations and the ten little Fitzclarences.

The prospect was far from inviting.

It was clearly not in order to wear a crown that she agreed to embark upon so unpromising an adventure as marriage with William Henry—later events showed that there was nothing she dreaded more than to sit upon a throne; and in any case it was unlikely that Clarence would outlive both his elder brothers. Perhaps she consented in order to please her mother, who doubtless thought it better for Adelaide to be unhappily married than not to be married at all; possibly she was weary of the restricted life of the tiny Court and knew that for a princess a wedding was the only way out. Whatever her reason, however, she did consent, and might reasonably have expected to see signs of gratitude in England. For this she looked in vain.

In April 1818, five months after Princess Charlotte's disastrous confinement, the English papers informed their readers nonchalantly in small side-paragraphs: "It is said that the Duke of Clarence has been accepted by the Princess Amelia Adelaide Louisa Therèse Caroline of Saxe-Meiningen."

William first broke the news to his eldest son:

"Both public and private duty conspired to make me see the absolute necessity of marrying a Princess: in addition to which I had the consolation to believe that, as Princes marry, I was fortunate indeed in having for my future wife, the Princess Adelaide . . . I believe I shall have virtue and innocence—at least, misery will not attend me."

To Lady Harcourt he wrote pompously:

"I do look forward with every fair prospect of happiness considering the high character the Princess Adelaide bears and the insight that her letters give me into her mind and resolution not to be dazzled by the offer, but seriously to reflect on the step which she means to take."

Ere long "he was handing about her picture . . . and bowing to each person when they passed it on, giving them credit for their approbation of his choice."

A debate in the Commons revealed some ill-feeling, however. The Government asked for grants for all four Royal Dukes on their recent or intended marriages, to liberate them "from the inconvenience of getting into debt."

Castlereagh opened the debate with the statement that these applications were not to be attributed "to any improvidence on the part of the reigning family." Parliament thought differently; and the members expressed their views with some venom. Questions were asked about the expenditure of the Queen, who was believed to be hoarding money at Kew in her retirement; and although it was remarked with obvious surprise that the new Duchess of Cumberland had "conducted herself with decency while in England" and that the Duke of Cambridge was not in debt at all, some members demanded to be shown Clarence's accounts and expressed the view that "through his misconduct" he had "extravagantly thrown away what Parliament had so liberally given him."

It was moved and carried that the grants proposed be drastically reduced. Instead of his suggested £40,000 a year and £20,000 down, Clarence was offered £24,000 annually, nothing down, necessary repairs only to Bushey and no furniture; and was told he could not have a Town house as well. One member, observing that "to foreign alliances he had no objection," expressed the hope that "they were entered into without mercenary views, and that they would be productive of happiness without burdening the nation." Another remarked that "the illustrious branches of the Royal Family, prevented from any alliance with the Dukes, Earls and Barons of England, were forced into alliances with weak and poor German families."

Canning hastened to assure the House that

"the Duke of Clarence would not have thought of contracting this marriage, it never would have entered into his contemplation to engage in this alliance, if it had not been pressed upon him as an act of public duty . . . He contracted this alliance not for his own private gratification, but because he had been advised to do so for the politic purpose of providing for the succession to the throne"—

which observation was greeted with loud laughter.

After this, Adelaide can have had no illusions about her reception in England.

Chapter 3 : *SOME INCREDIBLE IN-LAWS*, 1818

ADELAIDE'S betrothal was announced in Meiningen on April 19th. Three days earlier Castlereagh had informed the Commons on William's behalf that owing to the inadequacy of the proposed grant the marriage was off.

But despite the parsimony of a sorely tried Parliament, four royal weddings took place within the next three months.

In April Princess Elizabeth, the King's third daughter, married the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg, whom the English nobility thought beneath her—and themselves. "The possessions of his father," recorded Farington dryly, "are in extent about the size of Windsor Park, and he has about 32 soldiers; but he is a Prince."

"You never saw such a disgusting object," wrote a fair contemporary; and Lady Jerminham told her daughter that "they immersed him several times in a warm bath to make him a little clean, and they kept him three days without smoaking, which, as he smoaked five pipes a day, was great forbearance." Although the Landgrave was sick in the carriage when driving to Windsor from Buckingham House after the ceremony, Elizabeth was charmed with him, and the marriage proved very happy.

Strangely enough, George III never made any attempt to find husbands for his daughters, and had consistently turned down all offers made for them while they were of a suitable age. Only Charlotte Matilda, the Princess Royal, had been allowed to marry in her youth, twenty years before; and then the husband selected, Frederick II, King of Würtemberg, was believed by all Europe to have connived at the murder of his former wife. As the lady concerned had been the sister of the Princess of Wales, whom all the Royal family detested, perhaps the King and Queen felt that Frederick had been justified; but he did not prove a good husband to Charlotte Matilda.

Princess Elizabeth had always confessed to her friends her willingness to marry anybody rather than remain single; and it is

probable that she was more in love with marriage than with the Landgrave. Although she was said to have been secretly married to one of her father's pages and to have borne a child, she was now forty-seven, and it did not appear probable that any little Homburg would ever sit upon the English throne.

In May the Duke of Cambridge married in Cassel his Augusta, so generously relinquished by Clarence; and, in order to conform to British Law, they were remarried according to the rites of the Anglican Church at Kew in June.

This wedding aroused more enthusiasm than that of the Landgravine, which was regarded as rather a joke. Dull but decent, the bridegroom, who was not in debt and who was taking his position as Governor of Hanover seriously, was generally liked and respected; the twenty-year-old bride was "a most accomplished and amiable young lady"; and their children would be in direct succession to the throne.

Owing to the ill-health of the Queen, the ceremony took place quietly. The Archbishop arrived three hours late "through some mistake in not informing him of the hour fixed"; but when he finally did arrive everything passed off very successfully.

A few days later there was a contretemps. The young Duchess, who spoke no English, chanced to meet her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Cumberland, walking in Kew Gardens. This lady had the misfortune to be the wife of the most objectionable member of the family, as she was now beginning to discover. She had been entirely ignored by all her in-laws and the Queen refused to receive her. Very beautiful, very intelligent—if a little frail—she had just lost her first baby by the Duke. What was more natural than that the two lonely ladies should enjoy a little chat in their native tongue?

Queen Charlotte, however, was not of this opinion; and when she heard of the episode, her illness took so dangerous a turn that the Cumberlands had to leave England immediately; and this was a blow to them, for Prince Leopold, who was about to seek consolation on the Continent, had offered Claremont to the unwelcome couple during his absence.

The house proved very acceptable, however, to another royal

pair; for the Duke of Kent had found a bride at Amorbach. As he was marrying for the succession and was taking no chances about the arrival of the successor, he had selected Maria Louisa Victoria of Saxe-Coburg, Leopold's sister, a widow of thirty-two, with healthy children by her former husband, the Duke of Leiningen. They had been married in Germany in May; and on July 6th "their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent arrived with their suite in four carriages at Claremont, where they were received by Prince Leopold," in order to be remarried by the Established Church.

Two days earlier the future Duchess of Clarence had arrived in London almost unnoticed. William Henry had been unable, or more probably unwilling, to bring his bride to England himself, and two weddings were therefore not necessary in his case. The Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen was doubtless relieved to hear this; for she knew only too well what happened to people who married members of the House of Hanover by halves, and were later informed that the first half did not count. Mrs. Fitzherbert and Lady Augusta Murray were cases in point.

Adelaide was to be married once only or not at all; and if it was essential that the wedding should take place in England, then Louisa Eleanora would bring her daughter to London and see that she was legally married. Her child should not go alone to a strange country as the Princess of Wales had gone, escorted only by a suite of fault-finding Englishwomen, among whom was the bridegroom's mistress.

She stipulated, however, that her duty as guardian to her son would not allow her to dispose of part of his estate in travelling expenses, and pointed out that "it is customary in Royal families that the travelling expenses of the bride are defrayed by that Court to whose Royal family the bridegroom belongs." The British Prime Minister expressed his Government's willingness to pay the Duchess's return fare under the circumstances, provided the expenses "can be kept within reasonable bounds."

The bride knew that, owing to the Queen's illness, the wedding was to be celebrated privately; but she might reasonably have expected to be met by some member of the Royal family or even a

representative of the Cabinet upon her arrival in London, if not at Deal, where she spent her first night in England. She thought at least that she would be invited to stay at Carlton House or given a suite at St. James's. Two empty Royal carriages were awaiting them at Deal certainly, and arrangements had been made for them to sleep at Canterbury *en route*; but they seemed to have arrived before they were expected, for when, at seven o'clock on the evening of July 4th, 1818, "the Princess Adelaide of Meiningen (to whom the Duke of Clarence is to be espoused)"—apparently even her reason for coming required explanation in the newspapers—"accompanied by her mother and attended by various distinguished" (but unspecified) "persons, arrived in London and took up their residence at Grillon's Hotel," nobody was there to meet them. Research discloses that the "various distinguished persons" were two court officials from Meiningen and two German ladies-in-waiting. Apart from sailors, postillions and inn-keepers, the only Englishman they had met so far was the admiral commanding the Royal yacht which had brought them from Calais.

No sooner had they unpacked their carefully and economically chosen baggage (the trousseau had been selected by Queen Charlotte and was awaiting the bride elsewhere) than they received a visit from the Hanoverian Minister, Count Münster. He must indeed have proved a welcome caller to the two forlorn foreigners; but the information he gave was hardly reassuring.

He explained that there was at present no Court in London. The King was at Windsor, playing the organ, addressing the trees in the Park, believing himself to be dead and communing with angels. The Queen was dying of dropsy (and fury at the Cumberland-Cambridge incident) at Kew. One must never enquire where the Prince Regent was; and where his wife was, all Europe of course knew only too well. The bridegroom was staying out of London with Sir Charles Pole.

After which interview, the Duchess undoubtedly congratulated herself on her foresight in accompanying her daughter, and Adelaide was certainly wishing fervently that she had never left friendly little Meiningen.

At ten o'clock, just as the disillusioned and weary ladies were

about to retire for the night, they received a completely unexpected visit from the Regent, who had come to inspect his future sister-in-law.

This could hardly be considered an agreeable surprise, for they knew a good deal already about George, Prince of Wales—generally regarded as the worst cad in Europe.

Married secretly for ten years to Maria Fitzherbert, and content to allow the public to regard her as his mistress rather than risk losing the Throne for having married a Roman Catholic, in return for the silencing of his creditors by the Exchequer he had contracted a second, bigamous marriage in 1795 with his cousin, Princess Caroline of Brunswick.

This young lady, who had previously been turned down by the Duke of York, though handsome, was slovenly in her appearance, was raw and ignorant, and behaved like a badly brought-up school-girl. Lord Malmesbury, who had been sent to fetch her from Brunswick, had even been obliged to suggest to her that she should wash more and talk less. She was hardly a promising bride for the fastidious rake who at the time of the marriage had abandoned Mrs. Fitzherbert and was living publicly with an elegant and sophisticated woman of the world. Frances, Lady Jersey, a bishop's daughter and a grandmother to wit, accompanied the ill-matched couple on their honeymoon as sole lady-in-waiting upon the bride; and malicious and ruthless as she was, she made it her business to ensure that it was not a success. She encouraged poor, trusting Caroline to make every kind of mistake. She advised her how to dress, making sure that the suggestions offered were inappropriate or unbecoming; she arranged that she should ride badly broken horses; and even put spirits in her tea.

This went on for a year, the Regent allowing his mistress to insult his wife in every possible way; until, after the birth of Princess Charlotte, he turned Caroline out of his house and sent the baby, to whom she was devoted, to his mother.

At first the unfortunate Princess tried to live peaceably, if a little eccentrically, in the country; but when she found herself subjected to every kind of annoyance and persecution and was refused access to her child, she unwisely tried to retaliate.

The English people were then uplifted by the spectacle of a sixteen-years' dog-fight between their future King and Queen.

Caroline sold the sapphires given her by Queen Charlotte, saying she believed them to be "false as her heart and soul." She made wax figures of the Regent "with an amiable addition of large horns," poked pins into them and melted them before the fire at her own dinner-parties. She was rude to the rest of the Royal family and spread malicious stories about them, many of which appear to have been pure invention. She wore eccentric clothes. Mr. Whitbread, her champion and press-agent, was obliged to remonstrate with her for appearing over-*decolletée* at the theatre; and Fuseli, the artist, told Farington: "The Princess is grown very large, and in her dress, shows too much of the naked about her neck." She even sent an indecent drawing to a country neighbour whom she disliked. But the last straw was when, having adopted a baby, she made no effort to refute the charge made by friends and enemies alike that he was really her own son.

The Prince did not take all this lying down. He spied on her movements, cut down her allowance, would neither receive nor answer her letters and refused to let her visit her daughter. This vindictive conduct was not unjustified, for it is now known that he had certain proof of her attempt to compromise the sixteen-year-old Princess with an adventurer called Captain Hesse. After the final madness of the old King in 1811, who, not knowing the whole story, had always defended her, the Queen refused to receive her at Court. Should visiting foreign royalties remark upon the non-appearance of the Princess of Wales at state functions, it was always made quite clear to them that to call upon her would be regarded as a personal insult by the Regent.

Two years before her daughter's marriage, Caroline gave it up as hopeless and went abroad; but her conduct on the Continent in no wise enhanced her reputation.

The Comtesse de Boigne saw her at Genoa:

"There was a kind of Phæton constructed like a sea-shell, covered with gilding and mother-of-pearl, . . . lined with blue velvet and decorated with silver fringes; this was drawn by two very small piebald horses driven by a child, who was dressed like

an operatic cherub with spangles and flesh-coloured tights; and within it, lounged a fat woman of fifty years of age, short, plump and high coloured. She wore a pink hat with seven or eight pink feathers floating in the wind, a pink bodice cut very low, and a short white skirt which hardly came below her knees, showing two stout legs with pink top-boots; a rose-coloured sash, which she was continuously draping, completed the costume."

Unfortunately her exhibitionism did not stop at this. Mme. de Boigne was told by an innkeeper's wife when Caroline had stayed a week at her house that she had hastened to send away her daughters to one of their aunts after the first evening: "I was ashamed, Madame, of what I saw myself, and did not even like sending my servants to wait upon her."

Even her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Gloucester, usually so kind, wrote to the Regent upon Caroline's departure: "I congratulate you on the prospect of a good riddance. Heaven grant that she may not return again and that we may never see more of her."

Princess Charlotte put the whole thing in a nutshell when she observed: "My mother was bad, but she would not have become as bad as she was if my father had not been infinitely worse."

While she was abroad Caroline had the satisfaction of knowing that her husband was publicly drinking with Lady Hertford, his new mistress, "to the speedy Damnation of the Princess!"

The Duchess of Meiningen, aware of most of this, is not likely to have visualised the Regent in a particularly favourable light; indeed, his painted face and grotesquely obese form made him appear anything but prepossessing.

"He made himself a strange figure" (wrote Mr. Wollaston) "by drawing in his great body with a broad belt, and by the close buttoning of a kind of uniform jacket, . . . hiding the lower part of his face with a large black neckcloth, and then swelling out his shoulders and the upper part of his person with tags and embroidery and covering it with orders."

The First Gentleman in Europe was by this time decidedly *passé*.

But George Augustus Frederick, who had a great sense of the

dramatic, could play a part exquisitely when it suited him; and he rose to this trying occasion magnificently. He was gracious to the Duchess and paternal to Adelaide (who, he was gratified to see, was terrified of him); and the presentation, which seemed likely to be exceedingly uncomfortable, passed off pleasantly after all.

Having done the polite with considerable effect, the Regent was preparing to take his departure when the Duke of Clarence himself was announced.

This must have been a shock for Adelaide. She had been travelling for several consecutive days and was doubtless tired and bewildered and longing for some sleep and the ministrations of her *coiffeur*; and yet at half-past ten at night she had to meet for the first time the man on whom her whole life's happiness would depend.

William Henry had no idea that his belated appearance was unwelcome; although he had made it abundantly clear that he was in no hurry to meet his bride, he expected *her* to be dazzled by the magnificence of his offer and to be longing to meet *him*.

After all the jolly times he'd had with Dorothea Jordan, Clarence feared that henceforth life was going to be rather dismal. Obviously no well-brought-up princess could be expected to hit it off with his tough naval cronies—she would wince when they swore; she might even raise objections when they got drunk—and it certainly was going to be very awkward about his children. He was convinced that he would feel exceedingly repressed and uncomfortable in the company of a respectable woman (though, as a matter of fact, he had met very few). He was nearly fifty-four and he wanted to live his own life in his own way. He had no worries. Life at sea had made him tough and fit. His debts, to be sure, were always with him, but he was accustomed to them. His offspring didn't trouble him, because he let them all do much as they pleased. And yet now, for the sake of solvency and the Succession, he had landed himself with this young woman, exactly the same age as his eldest daughter, who, despite the tremendous honour he had conferred upon her, would probably be exacting and jealous and interfere with everybody and everything. Anyway, he had always detested foreigners.

William Henry rolled nautically into Grillon's Hotel feeling rather sore.

The lady differed considerably from his expectations. Small, slight and very graceful, she appeared scared and wistful—in great contrast to Dorothea's Juno-esque proportions and self-assurance. Mrs. Jordan's face was certainly more striking, but she had always looked wild and untidy, a child of nature; whereas this girl was *soignée*, with neatly arranged fair curls piled high on either side of her heart-shaped face. She was quietly dressed too—didn't look expensive to keep up—a great improvement upon the new Duchess of Kent, who affected colourful and flamboyant attire. That she spoke good English was a great relief to William, whose linguistic attainments, apart from some decidedly indecent French, were negligible—Cambridge's bride couldn't speak a word. In fact, Adelaide compared very favourably indeed with all his five German sisters-in-law. She appeared to be listening attentively to the Regent's pronouncements, which was a good sign, as George liked a sympathetic audience—as for that, so did he himself. All his family talked too much, and it was pleasant to find somebody who appeared willing to listen. He wished his brother would go home and give him a chance to talk to his bride, for although the Duchess of Meiningen was very gracious to him, he knew that she was mentally criticising his conversation and appearance. In fact, he was feeling flustered and embarrassed, and Adelaide's kind, gazelle-like eyes and gentle manner were comforting and reassuring.

Having duly considered all this, William began to feel better about his approaching captivity, and he did not order his carriage until half-past eleven.

Adelaide had no illusions, and had never expected to meet a hero of romance. She knew he was considered the ugliest of all his ugly brothers, and was undignified and obstinate and at times ridiculous. She was fully aware that she could not hope to compete with the brilliant charms of the late-lamented Mrs. Jordan of the lovely voice and merry laugh. She also knew that the shattering Dorothea had not provided his only amorous adventure. Miss Fortescue, Sarah Martin, Miss Wynne, Caroline von Linsingen and Polly Finch of Petersham Lodge were only some of the many



DOROTHEA JORDAN

From a contemporary print

minxes from whom his parents had been obliged to disentangle him; and on more than one occasion his shore leave had been curtailed suddenly by his irate father, because of some seaside lovely. She had heard, too, of his pathetic attempts to get married; and she fully grasped that she was the sixth lady and third princess to have his dazzling offer placed before her. Had they not all turned him down except Miss Wykeham, the heiress of Wenham?—and *her* attempt to become a member of the Royal family had been frustrated by the Regent, who thought she was mad. It had also been made perfectly clear to Adelaide that William was marrying her entirely for dynastic reasons, and that he neither loved her nor wanted to.

No bride could have ever dreaded the future more. She was right, however, in thinking that she already knew the worst, for the reality was much less grim. She would indeed have been surprised had she been aware that the Duke had once said to Mrs. Sutton: "Mrs. Jordan is a very good creature, very domestic and careful of the children. To be sure she is absurd sometimes, and has her humours. But there are such things more or less in all families." The fact was that his long liaison with Dorothea was never really a *grande passion* at all.

Clarence might be bluff and hearty, but he was also jovial and friendly and had the rare gift of being rude without being offensive. Straightforward and downright, sham and subterfuge were abhorrent to him; and pomposity, self-righteousness or cruelty were foreign to his nature; he was fond of his children, considerate to his servants and never ashamed of the old sea-dogs who called him friend. Completely oblivious to public opinion, he did what he thought right; and although Pye may have been a little wide of the mark when he had described the clumsy young midshipman as "a budding rose beneath the morning dew," there was a certain bracing wholesomeness about him which contrasted favourably with the rather stale and tarnished aura emanating from the Regent. Nelson had been his intimate friend; and the little Admiral wrote of him privately: "In every respect, both as a man and a prince I love him."

Adelaide could hardly be expected to feel the same way as Nelson

about this somewhat ineligible suitor; but at least she felt no aversion for him; and something in her warm little heart was touched by his childishness.

As she looked out of her bedroom window into the oil-lit street, the prospect did not appear quite so bleak as it had done earlier in the evening.

Chapter 4 : A NIGHTMARE WEDDING, 1818

*"He drew a circle that shut me out . . .
But love and I had the wit to win,—
We drew a circle that took him in."*

ANON

THE wedding was arranged for Saturday, July 11th; and, to save trouble and expense, the Duke and Duchess of Kent were to be remarried at the same time.

Adelaide had only a week in which to try on her trousseau and meet her future relations. It was considered superfluous that she should be given time to make friends with her bridegroom. The day after her arrival was devoted to business arrangements, Von Könitz acting on behalf of the bride; and although the Duke called several times, the Duchess and her daughter remained in the hotel all day.

She was taken next to Kew Palace to be inspected by her ailing mother-in-law.

"Small and crooked, with a true mulatto face," Queen Charlotte was not attractive; nor was the north-east boudoir, to which she had retired when life with the King became intolerable. The room was sunless and stuffy, and the upholstery was alive with moth. Parsimonious by nature and habit, she saw to it that neither she herself nor her entourage had any comforts or luxuries. She had few friends save her German lady-in-waiting, and her sole companions were her two bored unmarried daughters, both of whom disliked her and resented her attitude towards them over questions of money and personal liberty. For over fifty years she had been Queen of England, and she was accustomed to expect her good advice to be accepted as a command. She now gave Adelaide the benefit of some of this kind of advice.

She first indicated that William's debts were due chiefly to his dignified refusal of the meagre grant offered by the unreasonable

Commons, although the very modest income for which he had asked was clearly essential, since Adelaide herself was unfortunately so poor. (She omitted to mention that the loyal people of Meiningen had given her a dower of 25,000 florins and 10,000 florins for her trousseau.) She pointed out that she herself was in very straitened circumstances, having so many daughters to provide for (she passed over the fact that each princess was at this time receiving £9,000 a year from the nation), and was quite unable to help the Clarences in any way. She then explained that, owing to the unhappy financial position in which the bridegroom found himself, it would be impossible for them to live in England. It was regrettable too that, owing to her own poor health and the King's nervous breakdown, there could be no entertaining in connection with the weddings. The Regent would have given balls and *soirées* for all three brides during the rest of the Season had things turned out differently; but as that was now quite out of the question (for financial reasons also—but she didn't say so), it had been decided that they should all leave for Germany directly after the ceremony. The Queen intimated that it was required of Adelaide that she should reorganise her husband's finances, censor his conversation and persuade him to eat and drink less for the sake of his health. She next observed that she had heard with great concern that the Princess had promised William that she would regard his much-to-be-deplored family as her own step-children, and would undertake the upbringing of his younger daughters. This, of course, was quite impossible and not to be thought of at all. Adelaide would, she sincerely hoped, soon have her hands full with an heir-presumptive, for whom the wild and badly brought-up Fitzclarences would be most unsuitable companions—and she ended her homily by pointing out clearly that she expected to have a healthy grandchild submitted for her approbation at the earliest possible moment.

The visitor listened courteously to all Her Majesty had been kind enough to say, and thanked her prettily for her most valuable advice; but she remained adamant about William's children, and said she still felt it her duty to do her utmost for their welfare and to love them as her own.

This parting observation was not all well received; but Charlotte congratulated herself that, of all her six daughters-in-law, this one, whom she had herself selected, was the most promising.

"The unfortunate, and now we fear, not too highly respected Princess of Wales," as *The Times* called her, was undoubtedly the worst of them—but the King would insist upon that marriage, though she had told him over and over again that Caroline was unsuitable.

The poor dear Duchess of York was becoming very unsociable and eccentric of late, and was no help at all to her mother-in-law. She never came to Court if it could be avoided.

As for that shameless hussy the Duchess of Cumberland (her own niece, unfortunately), had she not felt obliged to "shut the doors of the Palace against her" in the interest of public morality?

Augusta Cambridge was, to be sure, a virtuous and dutiful daughter-in-law, but it really was most unfortunate that she spoke no English. This did not disturb the Queen personally—for her part she preferred to converse in German—but the English were so stupid and unreasonable about foreigners.

Kent, certainly, seemed well satisfied with his new Duchess; but Charlotte was dubious about the remarriage of widows—they did not always treat their second husbands with becoming docility.

This princess, however, seemed most promising. She was good and amiable; and, apart from this preposterous notion of taking over the Fitzclarences, she seemed genuinely anxious to act rightly, and—what was far more important in Charlotte's opinion—try to please her mother-in-law. Adelaide was then dismissed from the Queen's presence, and ushered into the drawing-room to be inspected by her fiancé's sisters.

Princess Augusta was fifty and felt frustrated. She it was who could soothe her father and stand up to her mother, and did her best to keep the family united by much kindly letter-writing. Handsome in a masculine sort of way, she had once been very beautiful; but the only royal offer of marriage that came her way, that of the Landgrave, had been passed on to her sister Elizabeth. His Serene Highness did not compare at all favourably with Sir

Brent Spencer, an Irishman whom she loved—and, some said, secretly married—many years before.

The younger princess, Sophia, was the more amusing of the two, and was an excellent mimic. Although she was forty-one it was considered necessary for her to live under the maternal wing. In her repressed youth she had borne a son to General Garth, one of her father's gentlemen, and—which was considered a far greater sin—had not been ashamed to own him. Queen Charlotte, therefore, kept an extra watchful eye on this, her erring daughter.

Adelaide liked both sisters, who were sensible and kind; and when she heard their praises of dear William's many kindnesses to down-and-out sailors, she felt more cheerful about the future.

The double wedding was postponed from July 11th, as had been arranged, to the 13th, as Queen Charlotte was ill; and the service was shortened for the same reason. An altar covered with crimson velvet was placed before the fireplace in the beautiful drawing-room at Kew Palace, and punctually at four o'clock the Regent gave both brides away.

The Duchess of Kent wore gold. Adelaide wore silver tissue trimmed with two broad flounces of Brussels lace, and a train to match fastened at the waist with a diamond clasp. Her curls were bound with a wreath of diamonds.

The sun streamed in at the south windows.

"From this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish till death us do part . . ." said the Archbishop—very loudly, so that nobody could pretend they hadn't heard—and he looked hard at William as he said it. Adelaide's heart pounded beneath the silver tissue; she wanted to run away. But it was too late now; the wedding was over, and she was kneeling beside the Duchess of Kent to receive her mother-in-law's blessing.

Charlotte gave it in a cracked, unemotional voice and retired immediately to her boudoir, leaving the rest of the party to eat a large family dinner provided by the Regent.

Interminable banquets tired Adelaide as a rule, but this one, which lasted for two hours, provided her with an opportunity to contemplate the rest of her new family.

She now saw the Duke and Duchess of York for the first time. Frederick was not impressive. "Tall, with immense embonpoint and not proportionately strong legs, one can see that eating, drinking and sensual pleasure are everything to him" recorded Stockmar for posterity. Although he was "very easily amused and particularly with jokes full of coarseness and indelicacy," Adelaide did not shine at this kind of conversation, and was greatly relieved that he seemed quite content to eat and drink as much as possible in the allotted time without trying to evolve unpleasing jokes for her entertainment.

Of Frederica, his Duchess, Greville, who was by no means squeamish, wrote:

"Her mind is not perhaps the most delicate, she shows no dislike to coarseness of sentiment or language and I have seen her very much amused with jokes, stories and allusions which would shock a very nice person."

This was perhaps just as well, since she had the misfortune to be the wife of the Duke! But he hastened to add: "Her own conversation is never polluted with anything in the least indelicate or unbecoming."

She was very short, had bad teeth and china-blue eyes which were disfigured by continual blinking, was pock-marked, and never stopped talking. The possession of a remarkably small foot was her sole claim to beauty. By 1818 she had become definitely eccentric, avoiding her in-laws as much as possible and devoting herself to country pursuits at Oatlands, where she had taken refuge from the Duke's repulsive behaviour. She bred dogs, kept a large private zoo and did good works unostentatiously in the village. At very rare intervals she would put in an appearance at her husband's side—usually after he had involved himself in some scandal, such as that of Mary Ann Clarke.

At the beginning of this liaison the Duchess, who had learnt not to fret over her husband's middle-aged *inamorata*, raised no objection; it kept the Duke in London out of the way. But when the old fool bought a villa at Weybridge for his Mary Ann, and when the abandoned wench had the effrontery to perform her devotions

in the parish church at the same time as the Duchess, Her Royal Highness could stand it no longer, and wrote to the Prime Minister demanding Mrs. Clarke's immediate removal to London. This episode soon became public property, and it was edifying for the young to hear their fathers tossing the coin of the realm with the query "Duke or darling?" in lieu of the customary "Heads or tails?" Frederick was said to resemble the King, and Mary Ann looked like Britannia.

It was not long before His Royal Highness was charged with financing his mistress by allowing her to sell commissions in the army. At a public enquiry the Duke was found to have sailed dangerously near the wind; and although nothing could be proved against him, he had to resign the office of Commander-in-Chief.

After this exposure, during which his idiotic love-letters to the corrupt Mary Ann were read aloud in open court, Frederick parted from his Egeria a sadder and a wiser man; but he took over a Mrs. Carey of Fulham instead, and continued to visit his wife only at week-ends or when he was more than usually pressed for money. But the Duchess couldn't help him much financially; as it was, she had to run his home out of her own Prussian dowry.

"Oatlands is the worst managed establishment in England," wrote Greville; "there are a great many servants and nobody waits on you; a vast number of horses and none to ride. . . . The distress they are in is inconceivable. . . . When the Duchess arrived there was no water in the house. She asked the reason, and was informed that the water came by pipes from St. George's Hill, which were stopped up with sand; and as the workmen were never paid, they would not clear them out. . . . On Thursday . . . the Steward had no money to pay the tradespeople. . . . The house is nearly in ruins. . . ."

Despite these *contretemps* they entertained lavishly: "I am just returned from Oatlands; we had an immense party. . . . The Duchess wished it to have been prolonged, but there were no funds." When her guests left, she retired for peace and quiet to her curious shell-lined grotto in the garden, surrounded by the tombs of her pets. Sometimes she even slept there.

Nevertheless Frederica had many staunch friends. Her country

neighbours loved and respected her, and many homes in the vicinity were indebted to her benevolent generosity. Even the cynical Beau Brummel, having once promised her that he would never publish his memoirs during the life of the Regent or his brothers, wrote, when publication would have spared him a debtor's prison: "I am under so many obligations to her, and have such a deep respect for her . . . that I would rather go to gaol than forfeit my word."

Her presence at the Regent's table was hardly conducive to harmony; for George was still angry with her for having continued to visit his wife after he had forbidden the family to do so. Much as she disliked Caroline, the Duchess had persisted in these visits on the ground that "she had always visited the Princess once a year, and she saw no reason for making a change."

The Cambridges, fortunately, were normal and friendly and very happy; and the young Duchess seemed to cling to Adelaide for counsel and protection in the strange surroundings in which they met. All women loved Adelaide for her sympathy and sincerity, and Augusta Cambridge was no exception.

The Duke of Gloucester, the Regent's cousin, was there with his "dear Mary." Although the Duchess was forty-two, they were rather newly wed. He was said to be a trying spouse who interfered with the housekeeping and exasperated the servants. Deciding that the reception rooms at Gloucester House were not kept clean, he locked them up and hid the key, so that his poor wife had to receive her friends in her bed-room. To-night, however, he looked benevolent enough, though sufficiently fatuous to deserve his nickname, "Silly Billy." The Duchess, who was the Regent's sister, was rotund and beaming and appeared sensible and kind.

It was naturally interesting to speculate about the other bridal couple. The Duke of Kent was completely bald and terribly pompous, and Adelaide thanked Providence that despite his "steady disposition and domestic good qualities, added to which he regularly went to Church" she herself was marrying the unregenerate and less sabbatarian William.

But the "excellent good little wife who makes Edward so

happy " appeared quite content with her lot. She was short and plump, with quick brown eyes and brown hair. Stockmar, ever a loyal servant of the Coburgs, put it mildly when he wrote: " Nature had endowed her with warm feelings, and she was naturally truthful and affectionate." But she was more than this; voluble and exuberant, possessive and jealous, she was tactless and outspoken to a degree. The wedding ceremony had not been so great an ordeal for her as it had been for Adelaide. She had already been the Duke's wife for two months, and, anyway, no marriage could be so trying as her former one with the disagreeable and unlamented old Duke of Leiningen.

Besides the Regent's two unmarried sisters, the party consisted of Archbishop Manners-Sutton, William Howley, Bishop of London, the Hanoverian Minister and his wife, who was later to become one of Adelaide's closest friends, and sundry English noblemen who appeared to regard the whole proceeding as a colossal joke. It was painfully obvious that many members of the Royal family were *not* there; and when the Duchess of Meiningen, to whom no one paid much attention, considered the reasons for their non-appearance she began to understand why the House of Hanover seemed so unpopular in England. If those of its members whom she *had* met were unprepossessing, how much worse must be those whom she had *not* met!

The King's malady had recently taken a turn for the worse. His appearances at the windows of the apartments to which he was confined, and from which he made grimaces at his subjects, were so alarming that she was thankful neither she nor her daughter would have to visit him.

The Princess of Wales was making a pitiful exhibition of herself all over the Mediterranean. Justly bitter because she was never officially notified of her daughter's death, she was deliberately doing her best to make the Regent look a fool. She appeared to be living on the most intimate terms with an Italian adventurer named Bergami; her English attendants had left her; and even the small Italian courts, where at first she had been well received and where morals did not matter much, now ignored her. People believed her to be insane.

The Duke of Sussex did not appear at the wedding either. Possibly he had refused to come, for he was known to 'disapprove of his brothers' autumnal marriages. On the other hand, he may not have been invited, for he was by no means *persona grata* at Court. Neither the Regent nor his mother approved of his revolutionary ideas or his involved matrimonial affairs.

Louisa Eleanora was thankful that the sinister, one-eyed Duke of Cumberland had left England before her arrival. She did not want Adelaide's wedding marred by the presence of the family skeleton. Nobody had a good word for Ernest Augustus. Even as a youth he had shamed the family by trying to kiss the Mother Superior of a French convent. He had been involved in a disgraceful election scandal and was universally believed to have murdered his valet under melodramatic circumstances. Even the Regent, who was a bad son, bad husband and bad father himself, said of Ernest: "There was never a father well with his son, or a husband well with his wife, or a lover with his mistress, that he did not try to make mischief between them." In fact, he had a most unsavoury reputation, and his Duchess was regarded in all well-conducted courts as an abandoned woman.

Another cause for thankfulness was that William Henry had not allowed his boisterous children to grace his wedding. He had been reluctant to leave them out because he obtusely convinced himself that his bride would like to see them; but fortunately, in this matter Queen Charlotte had put her foot down firmly.

At seven o'clock the Duke of Kent broke up the party by leaving with his bride for Claremont. After his departure the remaining guests walked across Kew Gardens and drank tea in the Queen's Cottage near the Pagoda.

It was an exquisite summer night, and, unlike his brother, Clarence seemed in no hurry to be off. Nobody had lent *him* a handsome mansion in which to spend his honeymoon; and even *he* realised that it would not do for him to take his bride to Bushey, which was filled with relics of Dorothea—both human and otherwise. There was also the problem of his mother-in-law. The Queen had not invited her to stay on at Kew; and he could hardly send her back to Grillon's Hotel alone. Clearly there was only

one thing to be done, and that was to take both bride and mother-in-law to his bachelor flat in Stable Court, St. James's Palace.

Nothing had been done to it for nine years. Mrs. Jordan's choice of decoration and furnishing had been somewhat theatrical when new and now looked tawdry and shabby. The only impressive piece of furniture was a

"lofty four-post bed; the frame composed of satin-wood, the pillars handsomely fluted . . . The curtains of a deep rose-coloured silk, with a yellow silk bordering and fringe . . . The coverlet also of deep rose-coloured silk, the mattress, pillows and bolster of white satin."

This magnificent exhibit was, fortunately, post-Dorothean, having been provided by the Government in 1814 for the King of Prussia, to whom the Duke had lent the house for a state visit.

When the Duke considered how small and inconvenient his abode was, he began to feel ashamed that he had nothing better to offer. It would perhaps have been more commodious at the hotel—but his means did not run to that. Monsieur Grillon might even ask to be paid in advance.

The long drive *à trois* in his shabby old coach was a trifle embarrassing. The Duchess of Meiningen, who was feeling nervous and rather *de trop*, chatted brightly all the way to London. Adelaide, wide-eyed and very pale, looked as though she hoped they would never reach St. James's. For the first time in his life William was scared stiff. . . .

There was some indefinable loveliness about this girl which made him afraid of her. He had never felt any reverence for a woman before. All the others had been so oncoming and mercenary. Even Dorothea, when he had been obliged to halve her allowance, had replied by sending the foot of a playbill bearing the information "No money returned after the rising of the curtain," and she *had* been furnished with several children of mixed parentage when she had first joined him at Petersham Lodge.

William contemplated his wife as they sat facing one another in the twilight. . . . The yellow light from one of the lamps fell on her shoulder. It began to rain. He shut the carriage window.

"With my body I thee worship . . . with all my worldly goods I thee endow . . ." The trouble was he had no worldly goods to endow her with at the moment. He had sent her five engagement rings, certainly—but they hadn't cost much.


How lovely her hands were! He had not noticed them before, and wondered why she kept them so tightly clasped. He hoped she wasn't as afraid of him as he was of her.

She appeared so wistful and trusting, and had placed herself so irrevocably in his hands. Hitherto his sole interest in her had been her ability to give him an heir. He felt a brute. . . . It occurred to him that maybe she would need protection as much from his own sins, negligences and ignorances as from those of his relations. . . .

The darkness came on apace as they drove in through the gates of St. James's Palace.

She looked very pretty, he thought, as she stood, a fragile, scared little figure, silhouetted against the candle-lit window to show herself to the crowd waiting below in the rain. Her silver gown glimmered in the darkness and the diamonds and raindrops sparkled together in her wet curls. . . .

Only to his bride on that July night was it ever revealed that William could be chivalrous and tender. Adelaide was loving and giving; and in her gentle arms his troubled heart found peace.



Chapter 5 : *BABIES*, 1819

ON the following morning Major George Fitzclarence, the Duke's eldest son, was driving too fast in his tilbury through Hammer-smith on his way from Bushey to London, when the horse bolted and he was thrown out. He was carried with a broken leg to the nearest pub, where he was attended by the local surgeon. A message was at once sent to his father, who, borrowing the Regent's bed-carriage, drove off to the scene of the accident and returned with the injured major to St. James's, where the new Duchess devoted her honeymoon to nursing him.

The newspapers had already announced: "The Duke of Clarence, influenced by motives of economy, will, after the solemnisation of his approaching marriage, take up his abode at Zelle." Within three weeks of his economical wedding the importunity of his creditors necessitated his immediate departure from England; and Adelaide packed her few wedding-presents and the trousseau chosen by her mother-in-law, in preparation for the tiresome journey to Hanover. Although she was a poor sailor and dreaded another sea crossing, it is unlikely, in view of her miserable welcome in England, that she minded the prospect of returning to Germany. The rooms at St. James's were exceedingly dingy and depressing, and she did not feel drawn to Bushey, with its raffish associations.

She was determined to make a success of her marriage, come what may, and was well aware that, should it fail, there was no way out for her save the kind of life which weighed so heavily on the Duchess of York. She was wise enough to realise that, although her marriage was devoid of romance, it need not necessarily be devoid of happiness; and she was determined to get the greatest possible contentment from it, both for herself and for her husband. If a long sojourn abroad would give him peace of mind and a chance to break with his ridiculous past, it was not for her to raise objections. So she repacked without demur, as

if the proposed journey had been expressly planned for her amusement.

Before leaving London she went to Kew to take leave of the Queen, and years afterwards described this visit to a friend:

"She felt a great deal, especially as the Queen did not like to talk of her health or to take leave of anybody. The Duchess, fearing that she should never see her again, felt hurt that she might not express her gratitude to her Majesty for all her goodness to her; and when she had wished her good-night, and shut the door of the room, she could not help opening it again softly to see her once more: the Queen heard it, and called the Duchess in. But then she merely spoke upon some indifferent subject, pretending not to perceive the Duchess' concern."

Even the warmth of Adelaide's affection failed to break through Charlotte's cold reserve. . . .

Attended by Sir John Warren, Dr. Halliday and Baroness Duran, the Duchess' Saxon lady-in-waiting, they left St. James's on August 3rd and embarked at Dover.

The *Royal Sovereign*, in which the party crossed the Channel, was the second-best Royal yacht. At the time she was launched her fittings were considered magnificent.

"She is completely copper-bottomed" (recorded a contemporary), "has above that a streak of yellow and then another of blue, ornamented with medallions representing the Four Cardinal Virtues as female figures in gilt frames. Over them there is a rich ornament of leaves entwined together, highly gilt. The figure-head is a representation of Her Majesty with the Imperial Crown over her head. . . . The stern is decorated with the figure of Neptune in his Car, with his Trident in his hand, the sea underneath, and Dolphins playing around. Over the cabin windows and under the taffrail are placed the figures of the four quarters of the world. . . . Upon the whole, as the sailors term it, there is an abundance of gingerbread work." The apartments laid out for the Royal family are most sumptuous. The woodwork is chiefly mahogany or cedar, with satin curtains and velvet seats. . . ."

But despite her imposing decoration she was nearly twenty years

old, only 96 feet long, and her tonnage 278; so the crossing to Calais was no pleasurable experience.

They set up house in the Lange Strasse in Hanover. The position they were expected to fill there was a difficult one. Although Clarence was the elder by nine years, it was to the Duke of Cambridge that the governorship of the little kingdom was entrusted, and when he was first notified of his elder brother's proposed stay, he had lodged a protest with the Regent. Adelaide had to give precedence to her twenty-year-old sister-in-law. But she was too large-hearted and level-headed to bother about trifles of this kind, and the two princesses became devoted friends.

They soon found that they shared a great happiness; for hardly had the party reached Hanover when the joyful news sped back to London: "The Duchesses of Clarence and Cambridge are reported to be in a family way." This was followed in November by an announcement in the newspapers: "Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Clarence is in a state which promises to realise the expectations of the nation."

At Kew, the old Queen uttered her *Nunc Dimittis* and departed this life on November 17th.

She had a stupendous funeral at Windsor; but few of those who mourned her outwardly felt any sorrow in their hearts. She had never been loved by the English, who mocked at her prim, dull ways and closely held purse-strings; and she was not a little feared, even by her sons.

A few years before her death, while being carried in her sedan chair from Buckingham House to St. James's to hold a Drawing-room, she had been "hissed and reviled and the people asked her what she had done with the Princess Charlotte"; whereupon the old lady, who disliked her subjects quite as much as they disliked her, "stopped her chair, put down the glass, and said: 'I am seventy-two years of age. I have been fifty-two years Queen of England, and I never was yet spit on' so they let her pass on, without further molestation."

The London papers were full of speculations about the absence of her children from her deathbed; but the country press contented itself with observing to its readers: "His present Majesty

and his Consort were the only instances in the United Kingdom of a man and his wife having been married above fifty years with twelve children living."

The Queen's will aroused much interest. She left the jewels given her by the King to the House of Hanover; those given her by the Nawab of Arcot to her daughters; and those she had brought with her from Mecklenburg back to the ducal family. Frogmore passed to Princess Augusta, Lower Lodge to Princess Sophia, and 2,140 yards of "silks and sattins not made up" to Mme. Beckendorff, her lady-in-waiting. "In another apartment was a large store of the most superb shawls, oriental presents to her Majesty from the King of Oude, but many of them nearly consumed by the moths." These moth-eaten shawls, which eventually came to the Duchess of Clarence, were in reality presents not from the King of Oude but from Warren Hastings, whose wife was a friend of the Queen; and they formed part of the loot for the acquisition of which he faced his historic trial.

When the rest of Charlotte's things, including her furniture, horses and carriages, were publicly auctioned by order of the Regent, the whole property was valued at £140,000.

And some people were rather disappointed. . . . They expected something much more startling; for the Queen was believed to have hoarded large sums of money during her guardianship of the King.

The Regent announced his intention "to wear the longest mourning that ever son did for a Mother, having lost one who was his Guide and Counsellor in all his varied distresses and difficulties."

The Duke of Clarence, however, showed no affection for his mother. Not many years before he had observed to Mrs. Sutton: "My father . . . married a disagreeable woman, but has not behaved ill to her."

It was a pity that the Queen did not live long enough to have the satisfaction of reading in her newspaper early in the new year of 1819: "It is understood that the Consorts of all the four Royal Dukes now abroad" (to wit: Clarence, Kent, Cumberland and Cambridge) "are happily advanced in pregnancy, and therefore

there is the most gratifying hope of securing the line of succession."

All the eight potential parents were delighted; but it was upon the Duchess of Clarence that all eyes were fixed, for unless something very unexpected and spectacular should happen to the Regent or the Duke of York, it was her baby who would one day rule England.

Unfortunately, however, William Henry did not understand that it was not every woman who could stage an annual happy event as nonchalantly as Mrs. Jordan. Her family of fourteen, ten of William's, three of Ford's and one by "A. N. Other," had always arrived without undue fuss. She usually left the stage for a few months, was invariably hissed by the audience and insulted by the press upon her reappearance—and that was all. So William, thinking he knew all there was to know about having babies, drove Adelaide around on the rough German roads, worried her by his well-meaning but undignified behaviour, and never noticed that she was looking wan and frail.

When, at the end of March, the Duchess of Cambridge presented her loving husband with a son called George, Clarence was present to certify the birth on behalf of the British Government. Taking his mission very seriously—there was to be no Young Pretender introduced into the Duchess' bedroom in a warming-pan—he himself locked all the doors on the further side of Her Royal Highness's dressing-room, and sat with the keys in his pocket in the ante-room until the infant prince arrived to claim his place as heir-presumptive of England.

Had he spent less time gestapo-ing his sister-in-law and more time watching over his wife, William would have been spared many regrets.

His choice of her medical attendant was curious, to say the least of it. Andrew Halliday was an army surgeon who had distinguished himself at the Battle of Waterloo; and although this was a great recommendation in the eyes of the Duke, it was hardly a qualification desirable in a maternity specialist.

While walking in the palace garden Adelaide caught a cold which, being neglected, turned to pleurisy. To cure this, the

doctors misguidedly bled her, thereby bringing on a premature delivery; and early in the morning of March 29th, three days after the birth of George Cambridge, Princess Charlotte Augusta Louisa of Clarence arrived in this wicked world, was baptised, and left it the same evening. She was buried on the following day beside her horrid old ancestor, George I.

The death of their future sovereign did not disturb the people of England unduly. They were not much interested in what went on in Hanover, anyway; and was not Prince George flourishing? And were not two other little cousins coming very shortly to put his little Hanoverian nose out of joint?

But on the Clarences, and especially on the Duchess, the blow fell heavily indeed. William, certainly, already had an elegant sufficiency of children; but he disliked both his next brothers and wanted an heir to frustrate their hopes of becoming kings. Adelaide just longed for a baby to love, and her disappointment nearly cost her her life.

Then it was that her husband realised for the first time how greatly he would miss her should she die; and he amazed his entourage by nursing her devotedly.

"I trust this amiable little Duchess will soon recover her strength," wrote the Dowager Queen of Würtemberg; "by all accounts she is the very woman calculated to suit my dear William's taste, and he loves her very much. His letters to me are always full of her, and it does me good to see he is attached to her and feels himself happy."

". . . Nothing can be going on better than William and myself," wrote the Duke of Cambridge to the Regent. "His Duchess is an excellent creature and improves amazingly upon acquaintance. I do assure you I like her of all things, and I really believe that William and her are very happy together. . . ."

The oddly assorted marriage was turning out most successfully. Colonel Wilbraham wrote home about it: "You would be surprised at the Duke. . . . His wife has entirely reformed him, and instead of that *polisson* manner of which he used to be celebrated, he is now quiet and well-behaved as anybody else."

William's good behaviour was not without its effect on the in-

valid, for by the end of April the newspapers announced: "The Duchess of Clarence is gaining strength and going on well towards recovery."

And in May the Duke of Cambridge, in describing his son's christening to the Regent, recorded:

"The Duchess of Clarence, who is now quite recovered, insisted upon being present . . . and she had such power over herself that she did not appear in the least affected at the ceremony. This shews the strength of her mind, and the goodness of her heart, for the scene must have been very trying to her feelings."

The infant George Cambridge did not hold the position of heir-presumptive for long, however. The Clarences moved to the Baths of Liebenstein in Meiningen and stayed in the ducal villa next to the Kurhaus. Here the news reached them that "a pretty little princess as plump as a partridge" had been born to the Duchess of Kent at Kensington Palace on May 24th, and three days later they heard from Berlin that Frederica Caroline, Duchess of Cumberland, had presented her disagreeable husband with a son, another Prince George.

Surrounded by her young brother's friendly subjects, Adelaide derived considerable benefit from the Liebenstein waters, and felt so much better by August that she persuaded William to follow the example set by the Duke of Kent and take her to England in time for the birth of another expected baby. This meant pocketing his pride and accepting the reduced Parliamentary grant which he had so cavalierly rejected eighteen months before; but the Duchess felt it was their duty to return to England; and William, who had come to respect her judgment, agreed to accept what the Commons offered, and take her to his home.

Although Adelaide was under the care of Dr. Halliday, reinforced (by post) by Sir Henry Halford, the Regent's doctor, the Duke again forgot that she was not the robust Dorothea, and despite the fact that it involved a considerable amount of unnecessary travelling, decided to introduce her to his married sisters en route.

They went first to visit the newly widowed Queen of Würtem-

berg at Louisbourg. William was rather taken aback at the changed appearance of his eldest sister, for she had become

“very large . . . with a great deal more lower stomach. She is neat and clean, but certainly does not dress to advantage, for her hair is very thin, and combed flat upon her face, which is three or four times larger than it was.”

This portly lady, who had lived so long in Germany that she spoke English with an accent and wore evening-dress in the day-time, had lost a baby daughter herself many years before, and she was exceedingly kind and maternal to Adelaide, congratulating her privately on the remarkable improvement in William's behaviour.

From Louisbourg they went on to Homburg to visit the newly wed Landgravine Elizabeth and her homely spouse; and then on again to Ghent to stay with Adelaide's sister Ida, the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, whose husband was the Governor. Here they found many friends, for Adelaide had stayed in Ghent in 1816. Among them were Sir Richard and Lady Bedingsfeld, who, like other English Roman Catholics, had come to Flanders for the education of their children—since the British Universities were closed to them.

From Ghent William wrote home: “I trust and hope to arrive with this excellent and admirable Princess at St. James's on the 10th” (of September) “by yacht from Calais”; and by the 5th they had reached Dunkirk. Here, worn out by continuous travelling over bad roads in exceptionally rough weather and by the strain of meeting in-laws, Adelaide collapsed and had a miscarriage. They remained at Dunkirk for a few days; and then, seeing how Clarence disliked the French and how anxious he was to be back in England in time for the marriage of his eldest son, the Duchess, brave woman that she was, insisted that she was in a fit state to cross the Channel.

The weather was still exceedingly unpropitious; and when the *Royal Sovereign*, which had been sent to fetch them, at last weighed anchor off Dover, Adelaide was not fit to be moved further than Walmer Castle, where she was obliged to remain for six weeks.

The castle belonged at that time to Lord Liverpool as Warden of

the Cinque Ports; and some years later the Duke of Wellington, offering it to Queen Victoria for the use of her children, described it as "the most delightful sea-residence to be found anywhere. . . . They can be out all day on the ramparts and platforms quite dry, and the beautiful gardens and wood are enclosed and sheltered from the severe gales." The gardens and wood may have been sheltered from gales, but the castle itself was not, and Lady Lyttelton, who took the Royal children there, found it exceedingly draughty.

William, however, was accustomed to sea-breezes; and it was noted with surprise that instead of driving off post haste to London to look up his old associates, he remained with his wife during her convalescence, until, in mid-November, they arrived back in the bachelor flat in St. James's—in which comfortless abode Adelaide spent her first English winter.

Early in December they were invited to a fête at Carlton House to meet Lady Hertford, who was dressed in scarlet crêpe and made a "very conspicuous appearance." The large mob round the door were evidently struck by this, and tried to overturn her chair, and the Regent was loudly hissed on his own threshold. Lady Jerningham found the Duchess of Clarence's manner "pleasing, but she is not handsome."

Apart from these occasional entertainments, the Court was as dull as ever. The King was still confined at Windsor, unaware that he was a widower. Princess Augusta had moved from Kew to be near him—though the Duke of York, who kept as far away as possible, received a considerable sum of money from the nation for acting as his guardian. Princess Sophia had just moved into Lower Lodge; and the Duchess of York was dying at Oatlands.

The Kents had moved from Kensington to Sidmouth, ostensibly in order that the Duchess and her infant might benefit from the ozone, but in reality so that the Duke might be as far removed as possible from his former tradesmen. Soon after the birth of his daughter he had attempted to raise money by raffling his private house, Castlebar Hill at Ealing, for £70,000, and proposed to issue 6,000 tickets to the public. But the Cabinet intervened to pre-

vent the lottery, and the Duke, feeling that he had done his best to satisfy his creditors, turned his attention to pleasanter matters. It had just been foretold by the Regency equivalent of Old Moore that two members of the Royal family would die in 1820; and the Duke, convinced that he was rapidly approaching the throne and determined to outlive his three elder brothers, devoted himself to the care of his health and the re-orientation of his debts—one could hardly call it the reorganisation of his affairs. The Duchess was dutifully nursing her plump baby herself; for her husband, whether from motives of hygiene or economy, refused to have a wet-nurse.

The Devonshire mists, however, were no kinder to them than his creditors, and on January 23rd Edward himself fulfilled the seer's forecast by dying as the result of getting his feet wet.

The Regent, who disliked his smugness, who had objected to his returning to England and who had quarrelled with him publicly at Princess Victoria's christening, now refused to pay his funeral expenses.

The poor Duchess, a foreigner in a hostile country, with no assets save debts, appealed desperately to her brother at Claremont; and it was Prince Leopold who finally went down to Sidmouth to escort his sister to Kensington and the corpse of her husband to Windsor.

He it was, also, who dissuaded the shattered widow from returning forthwith to friendly Amorbach and taking the future Queen Victoria with her—which was precisely what the Regent hoped she would do. Leopold, moreover, made it possible for her to remain, by allowing her £3,000 a year from the income granted him by the nation as Princess Charlotte's widower.

But it was really the Duchess of Clarence who gave to Maria Louisa Victoria the courage to face life in England.

Early in February Lady Jerningham wrote to her daughter:

"Captain Usher . . . had just handed the Duchess of Clarence into her carriage to visit the Duchess of Kent, where she goes every day. The Duchess of Kent is in deep affliction, and the Duchess of Clarence, after her first interview with her, was so affected she could not recover herself. . . ."

Is it possible that it was not so much the affliction of her sister-in-law as the sight of an endearing baby crawling on a yellow carpet which so greatly affected the Duchess?

"I cannot yet bear to think of that good excellent woman, the Duchess of Kent and all her trials" (wrote Princess Augusta); "she is the most pious, good, resigned little creature it is possible to describe. . . . I received a letter from her and one from Adelaide written together. . . . Dearest William is so good-hearted, that he has desired Adelaide to go to Kensington every day as she is a comfort to the poor widow; and her sweet gentle mind is of great use to the Duchess of Kent."

At the end of the month Adelaide was still visiting Kensington and justly deserved Princess Augusta's description of her as "a saving angel for the family."

A week after the death of the Duke of Kent, the old blind King completed the prophecy himself—to the very obvious delight of his eldest son. But George III was sincerely mourned by his subjects, who saw in him the first decent-living sovereign since the death of Queen Anne. He had ruled over England and Hanover for sixty years, and few people then living could remember another King. The madness, which curiously enough was first manifested in the year of Clarence's birth, was erroneously attributed to his supposed ill-treatment by the Queen; it was far more likely to have been due to the continual anxiety caused by the behaviour of his sons. As the Duchess of Gloucester confided to a friend many years later, "The fact is, there were too many of us."

The new King was at Brighton at the time of his father's death; and was taken so suddenly and seriously ill himself that he very nearly died too. The funeral was consequently postponed until February 15th. Clarence was present, and felt much mortified that a legacy left him by the late King had been appropriated by the new one.

No sooner was the funeral over than the public was disquieted by the discovery of the Cato Street conspiracy, in the frustration of which Captain Frederick Fitzclarence played a distinguished part.

To Adelaide, who had been born in the year of the Declaration

of the French Republic and who could remember the occupation of Meiningen by the Revolutionary armies, this plot appeared more dangerous than it really was, and she was considerably alarmed for the safety of the Royal family.

After two years of travelling and discomfort and debts and disappointments and illnesses and funerals, it is not to be wondered at that Sir Henry Halford told the Duke that unless he removed his wife from the dark and draughty rooms in Stable Court and gave her some chance to build up her strength in the country, he could not hope to become the father of a future sovereign.

During the winter Adelaide had shown him that it was better to live simply and in harmony with one's tradesmen than to be continually fleeing from one's debts. So efficiently had she managed his finances that she had already satisfied at least some of the creditors, had made his domestic arrangements more comfortable and even found a little money to spare for charity. And Adelaide seemed anxious to leave London . . . so for her sake they went to Bushey.

By the time the horse-chestnut avenue was in flower, Sir Henry's prognostication proved to be correct and there was again the promise of a child.

Chapter 6 : *THE FITZCLARENCES*, 1820

ADELAIDE'S new home, a red-brick, William-and-Mary, three-storied house near Hampton Court, belonged to Clarence in his capacity of Ranger of Bushey Park.

Here he had brought Dorothea in 1797; here she had presided at his dinner-table for fourteen years; and here the Duchess found most of his children awaiting her, not a little defiantly.

William was pathetically anxious that "this superior minded Princess," as he described her to a friend, should find it possible to live harmoniously with his offspring. But even his best friends feared he was being over-optimistic, for the Fitzclarences were a riotous, self-willed brood, whose education had been neglected and who had always regarded Bushey as their rightful home. What was more probable than that in their resentment of Adelaide's presence they would combine against her?

Rather incongruously they were all called after their Royal uncles and aunts.

George, whom she had already met when she nursed his broken leg,

"was voted by the whole Mess, a very dirty fellow in his person, and one who evidently conceived himself so much the better than his brother officers, from being the bastard of the Duke of Clarence. Everybody acknowledges him to be brave; but . . . he ate so voraciously, that he well-nigh bred a famine in the mess-room."

Fortunately for his step-mother this charmer had recently married Miss Wyndham, the natural daughter of Lord Egremont, and was honeymooning on the Continent.

Adolphus was in the navy. "His looks were not much in his favour," wrote Mr. Lyttelton, "a strange sort of slouching eyelid to one of his eyes, and vast pouch-like chops."

Frederick, who was considered the best-looking and "out and out the best of the family" by Lady Sefton, was in the army; and



BUSHEY PARK, 1831

From a contemporary print

another brother had died in India. But there were six children still under the paternal roof.

Sophia, irreverently known as "Princess Sophia of Jordan," was Adelaide's own age. Mary, "a fine looking, brown girl with a pleasant countenance and manners," was twenty-two and resembled her mother. Elizabeth was nineteen, Augusta seventeen, Augustus fifteen and Amelia only thirteen.

The launching of the elder daughters in society and the upbringing of the two younger children clearly demanded immediate attention; and it was no easy task for the Duchess to inaugurate the very necessary reforms. But she opened her heart to William's wild progeny with such excellent effect that, in due time, instead of being merely a roof over their heads Bushey became a real home for them all; and although none of them showed her any gratitude, even the most troublesome found life pleasanter than it had been before her coming.

Adelaide's new financial arrangements benefited everybody. Little by little the house was redecorated and refurnished (though never could she induce William to move the foremast of the *Victory*—relic of his beloved Nelson—from the dining-room, where it took up a great deal of space). Life gradually became gracious and orderly and comfortable. She interested the Duke in his home; and on summer mornings they would go round the garden arm in arm, discussing the improvements they would make when they could afford it. It was characteristic of Adelaide that nothing was ordered which could not be paid for at once, and that the first improvements made on the estate were to the labourers' cottages.

She persuaded William to eat and drink less, with a resultant improvement in his health, appearance and temper. She encouraged him to live quietly and respectably; and there was soon a marked amelioration in the manners of paterfamilias and his offspring alike. About this time Mr. Lyttelton dined with the Duke at Portsmouth, "who, to our astonishment, behaved perfectly well, was civil to everybody, even gentlemanlike in his manner, did not say a single indecent or improper thing."

She welcomed the bashful old salts and their wives, whose com-

pany William had enjoyed so much in his bachelor establishment, and made them feel at ease at her simple, informal dinners. She tried not to show that she was shocked by their nautical yarns; and was genuinely pleased to see them because they made her husband happy.

She was, nevertheless, not a little surprised to find that he appeared to have no other friends at all, and that the aristocracy ignored him absolutely.

The presence of Dorothea had deterred well-born ladies from visiting at Bushey in the past; but even now the blue-blooded lovelies who came to pay their respects to Adelaide made it clear that they only troubled to drive so far from Town in order to look down the bridges of their elegant noses at her new *décor* and to smile patronisingly at her simple and unaffected pleasures. When they had taken their graceful departures, the Duchess felt that they had labelled her rather middle-class.

The absence of the fashionable and supercilious from her parties, however, did not disturb her in the least; nor did it deter her from entertaining those of her country neighbours with whom she had tastes in common. Like them, she disliked the insolent and haughty manners of the Mayfair ladies; and for their children she gave some of the most enjoyable parties in England.

In the Duke's disreputable youth he had spent many evenings behind the scenes at Drury Lane and was wont to receive Dorothea's stage friends at Bushey. The Duchess continued to welcome them there with her usual simplicity and kindness. One day the Duke noticed Dowton, the actor, looking at Mrs. Jordan's portrait over the mantelpiece.

"Yes, Dowton," said William, "she was an excellent woman; and, by the way, I'll tell you a little story about that picture. It always hung there; but some time before I was married to the Duchess I caused it to be removed. Well, shortly after I brought the Duchess home, I found one morning the picture in its old place. 'This,' said the Duchess, 'was done at my desire. I discovered that the picture had long hung there; it was the picture of the mother of your children and it was not fit it should be displaced. You must gratify me, and let it remain.'"

No wonder Adelaide was able to get away with her less welcome reforms!

But this was too good to endure; and these few months of rural pleasures were followed by another upheaval.

Ever since George IV's accession there had been a foretaste of trouble concerning the position of his wife, now the Queen.

Early in February, ignoring the opposition of the Archbishop, he had refused to allow her name to appear in the Liturgy, on the officially recorded ground that "if any defiled name should there be inserted, the principles of morality would be invaded and the foundations of religion would be sapped." But Caroline's was not the only defiled name: the King, whom Wellington said "was degraded as low as he could be," was in fact changing mistresses at the time of his accession.

Lady Hertford had just been asked by an inquisitive ill-wisher whether the King ever talked to her about a certain Lady Conyngham. To which unkind inquiry the indignant Marchioness replied with colossal sangfroid that "intimately as she had known the King and openly as he had always talked to her upon every subject, he had never ventured to speak to her upon that of his mistresses."

In view of the decidedly soiled reputation of their monarch the general public were prepared to side with his absent wife; and as he was driving from Ascot he was greeted with shouts of "Where's the Queen?"

This point was soon settled, when early in June, Caroline herself disembarked from the mailboat at Dover to claim her rightful position.

The Government tried in vain to bribe her to return to the Continent; but Caroline enjoyed an uproarious welcome from the populace, and took up her abode at Brandenburg House, Hammer-smith, where she received hundreds of loyal addresses.

Here "her establishment and mode of life was very extraordinary and comfortless and unbecoming her situation" recorded Lady Vernon, and she added that she was also "very disagreeably dirty in her person."

Lady Jerminham told her daughter that

“ a young man whom the Queen seemed to like and who was . . . a painter by profession, being ordered by her to take her picture, on being ushered into her room found her on the ground without shoes or stockings, eating a potato.”

The immediate consequence of Caroline's refusal to retire gracefully from the scene of her triumph was the postponement of the Coronation, which was to have taken place in August, and the introduction of the Bill of Pains and Penalties, which amounted to a trial for adultery. Feeling on both sides rose very high and the issue became political. Even the members of the Royal family took sides. Prince Leopold had the courtesy to pay his mother-in-law a formal call; and the Duke of Sussex was one of her most outspoken adherents. The Duke of York, determined not to lose the succession to the throne, threatened to support the Queen unless the King would undertake not to re-marry were he successful in obtaining his divorce.

Those of her subjects who knew something of Caroline's mode of life were convinced of her guilt (Clarence was one of these); but the majority of the English people, who did not know the whole story, were equally convinced of her innocence; and as everybody was of opinion that whatever the Queen had done was indubitably the result of her treatment by the King, whose own private life was infinitely worse, the Bill was dropped—which amounted to an acquittal.

So unpopular had the King become that he dared not go out, and was talking of going to Hanover and leaving the Duke of York to act as Regent of England.

On the other hand Caroline also had her enemies. A broadsheet sold in the London streets exhorted her:

*Most gracious Queen, we thee implore
To go away and sin no more;
But lest this effort be too great
To go away, at any rate.*

There were no police in those days—the need for them first became apparent during these disorders. Such order as was main-

tained was kept by the military authorities; and when certain regiments, notably the Guards, were found to be disaffected and on the side of the Queen, it appeared as though a civil war was imminent.

All this was very painful for the ladies of the Royal family, but doubly so for Adelaide, who hated all manner of strife and who was doing her best to sweeten family relationships. In the midst of these unedifying manifestations the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar paid a three months' visit to her sister at Bushey.

No sooner had the mud-slinging associated with the Queen abated temporarily than the Duchess of York, unable to stand any more unpleasantness, departed this life on August 6th. Buried at her own request in Weybridge churchyard instead of at Windsor, she was escorted on her last journey by the pattering paws of her innumerable little dogs.

Immediately after her death the widower was urged by his friends to dry his crocodile tears and re-marry; in fact, the Elector of Hesse sent a message offering his daughter for the purpose. Fortunately for the future of the English Crown, however, the Duke was reluctant to break with the Duchess of Rutland, his latest *inamorata*, under whose auspices he sold Oatlands (which became an hotel) and began building a huge mansion in St. James's with the proceeds. The purpose of this enterprise was not so much to provide shelter for the Duchess of Rutland as to provide a palace of the first magnitude for the future Frederick I.

At the end of October William was presented by his eldest son with his first grandchild, who, significantly enough under the circumstances, was christened Adelaide. The Duke was immensely proud of this new addition to his family, but he was by now far more concerned about another infant, for whose prospective arrival he felt more directly responsible.

But the Duchess would not allow him to neglect his children for her sake, and they were both present at the wedding of his third daughter, Elizabeth, to the Earl of Erroll at St. George's, Hanover Square, on December 4th. "What a handsome, spanking creature Lady Erroll is, and how like her mother," remarked Creevey. "She looks as if she was quite uncomfortable in her

fine cloaths and wanted to have them off." This was considered a good match. Adelaide's calm acceptance of the Fitzclarences had undoubtedly bettered their social position; and it was perhaps owing to her that three of William's sisters joined in giving the bride her wedding-gown and that Princess Sophia attended the reception.

A week after the wedding, Adelaide's longed-for baby daughter, Princess Elizabeth Georgina Adelaide, was born prematurely at St. James's Palace on December 10th.

Although she arrived six weeks too early, the baby weighed eleven pounds and nearly killed her fragile little mother. She bore a striking resemblance to her father. "Her Royal Highness is as well as can be expected. The infant is born before its time about six weeks," said the bulletin signed by Sir Henry Halford, Sir William Knighton and Dr. Halliday; but a few days later the newspapers were "happy to be able to state that the Duchess of Clarence and her infant are doing very well."

Although George IV had refused to allow the Duke of Kent to call his baby Elizabeth and had even quarrelled with him over it at the font, it was at the King's special desire that the Clarence baby was called after England's greatest Queen.

The Christmas of 1820 was the happiest in Adelaide's life.

Chapter 7 : *THE DUCHESS WHO WAS DIFFERENT,*
1821-1825

*" Dans vos cieux, au delà de la sphere des nues,
Au fond de cet azur immobile et dormant,
Peut-être faites-vous des choses inconnues
Ou la douleur de l'homme entre comme élément."*

VICTOR HUGO

DESPITE the menacing shadow cast by the presence of the Queen, who had rather pointedly taken a house in South Audley Street for the Coronation, the new year of 1821 was welcomed with joyful anticipation by Society and trade alike. There were to be balls and routs in plenty, and the great day itself was to cost £240,000. Nobody under sixty-five could remember the last Coronation.

On New Year's Day the newspapers recorded that

" the Duchess of Clarence being considered happily recovered from her accouchement, the band accompanying the mounting of the King's Guard played when near the residence of the Royal Duke . . . for the first time. The infant Princess Elizabeth continues remarkably well and thriving."

Adelaide hated overheated rooms and extravagant display; she felt ashamed of the irreligion and mouldy private life of the Sovereign; she wanted to nurse her baby; but, since the death of the Duchess of York had made her the first lady in the land after the King's sisters (the Queen, of course, did not count), she planned her wardrobe more lavishly than was her wont, undertook as much entertaining as the miserable rooms in Stable Yard would hold and was ready to play her part gaily in all the forthcoming festivities.

And then came another tragedy.

On Monday, March 5th, child-ridden matrons in manors, halls and rectories throughout the country read with consternation in their newspapers:

"Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Clarence has endured the great affliction of losing her infant child. The young Princess expired yesterday morning at 1 o'clock in a convulsive fit. She was taken ill on Thursday; and it appears that the cause of her death was an entanglement of the bowels."

The baby died in great agony. In those days it was impossible to operate.

Five days later the tiny cortège of two carriages was escorted from St. James's to Windsor by a company of the 10th Hussars; and they laid the little coffin beside that of Princess Charlotte's baby.

The King was genuinely distressed. From the Pavilion he wrote to Sir William Knighton:

"For God's sake come down to me tomorrow morning . . . The melancholy tidings of the almost sudden death of my poor little niece has just reached me and has upset me beyond all I can express to you . . . You will be a great consolation to me. . . ."

George IV did not want the Duchess of Kent's daughter to become Queen of England. . . .

But in the excitement and turmoil of the Coronation season England soon forgot about it.

"I cannot help feeling a little sorry for our poor Queen Bess, tho' I could not bear the degree of Rank which the Fitzclarences had taken on her birth," wrote Lady Williams-Wynn to her daughter. And nobody else thought about her at all.

Only Queen Bess's mother remembered; and for the rest of her life she carried with her Scoular's statue of her sleeping baby wherever she went. Life was never the same for Adelaide again.

How her heart must have ached as she looked wistfully at that other bouncing infant in Kensington Palace whom she knew would probably wear her own child's crown—especially when the little Princess, spotting the star on Uncle William's chest, greeted him as Papa! Yet to Victoria's mother she wrote: "My children are dead, but your child lives, and she is mine too."

Only a woman as truly great as Adelaide could have been sincere

when she wrote to her two-year-old niece for her birthday a month later :

“ My dear little heart—

“ I hope you are well and don't forget Aunt Adelaide; who loves you so fondly.

“ Loulou and Wilhelm desire their love to you, and Uncle William also.

“ God bless and preserve you is the constant prayer of your most truly affectionate

“ Aunt Adelaide.”

Loulou and Wilhelm were two of her sister's children, whom William, with great good sense, had brought over from Ghent for his wife to love.

The Duke now began to realise that Adelaide would probably be unable to give him the child for which he longed—and for which he had married her. But his marriage now meant more to him than that, and he had grown to love his wife dearly for her own sweet sake. So pathetically anxious was he that no word of his should reveal his disappointment that he even erred on the side of over-cheerfulness and prepared to join in the Coronation jollifications as though nothing had gone wrong. And to please him Adelaide hid her sorrows and smiled and faced the London season.

On May 19th she graced the wedding of Frederick Fitzclarence to Lady Augusta Boyle; and early in June she went to the Concert of Ancient Music with Princess Augusta.

By that time the pomp and circumstance were in full swing. The King went everywhere with Lady Conyngham, the “ most good-natured but the most rapacious ” of his mistresses. When they dined at Devonshire House she “ had on her head a sapphire which belonged to the Stuarts and was given by Cardinal York to the King. He gave it to the Princess Charlotte, and when she died he desired to have it back, Leopold being informed it was a Crown Jewel.” (Which it was, but that was no reason for Lady Conyngham to wear it !)

The Coronation was not a financial success:

“ Applications for seats to see the Procession were, owing to apprehension of tumult, very slack. The official agents for the

Central Pavilion told William Offley that they should lose several thousand pounds by their speculation. They paid to Government £7,000 for the ground only. They erected the Pavilion to hold 7,000 persons. They reduced their prices from three to one guinea. Some of the booths had scarcely any persons in them."

The King, who regarded the Service as a monster theatrical production, "appeared to be pale and with unpleasant feeling when he went into the Abbey." His dress alone cost £8,000, and most of his jewels, including the Crown itself, were hired for £16,000.

"The Royal dukes very sorry performers, and ill-looking fellows indeed," wrote Mr. Lyttelton, and he added: "The Archbishop's sermon not in my opinion quite admonitory enough, but on the whole uncourtly enough to astonish the foreigners and displease the courtiers."

The theatrical atmosphere was intensified by the dramatic arrival of the uninvited Queen to claim her right to be crowned beside her detested husband. Her ejection and the anti-climax of her homeward drive cast a blight over the proceedings; though the obtuse Duke of York was so favourably impressed with the arrangements that he was heard to exclaim: "By Gad, I'll have everything the same at mine." Little did he think that he would not be present at the next Coronation.

Three weeks later the broken-hearted Queen died suddenly and dramatically at Brandenburg House.

Even on her deathbed the world was cruel to Caroline of Brunswick. She had been poisoned or committed suicide, said the rumour-mongers. She had been refused the Sacrament, said the censorious. And thus this marriage, so unblest from the outset, ended as disastrously as it began.

The welcome news reached the King at Holyhead, where he was embarking for a state visit to Ireland. Not only was he thankful to be rid of Caroline thus unexpectedly, but he was, for once, grateful to her for having expressed a dying wish to be buried in Brunswick. This simplified matters considerably and spared him the prospect of one day having to lie at her side; and in order

that his visit to Dublin might not be unduly delayed, he ordered the funeral to be hurried as much as possible.

Like her life, her funeral was scandalous. A cardboard crown was carried before the coffin (there being no other—not even a hired one). At Kensington Church the cortège had been ordered to turn northward to avoid demonstrations on the part of the Queen's friends; but the crowd prevented this manœuvre, and the procession dragged on amid rioting as far as Park Lane. Here again there was fighting; and when it turned from Oxford Street into the Tottenham Court Road to avoid traversing the City, the angry crowd broke the military cordon and attacked the Guards. The cortège passed on wearily amidst scenes of disorder and violence, several people being killed and wounded en route, until on the following day, at Harwich, the weary corpse was bumped carelessly aboard the ship which was to carry it home.

No notice was given to the Brunswick authorities of the arrival of the coffin and no preparations were made for its reception, but this did not disturb the King.

No sooner had Caroline's body left Harwich than the Royal yacht sailed into Dublin Bay, where the Irish were shocked to see their Sovereign appear on the following day in "a bright blue coat with the brightest yellow buttons"; and the view was expressed that "nothing is so indecent as the total neglect of mourning." George, however, went down better in Ireland than in his own country; and well aware of the reception he was likely to receive on his return to London, he decided to extend his tour to Hanover until Christmas—to the undisguised delight of most of his British subjects.

It was supposed that he had gone to Germany to look for another wife; and Creevey observed: "Probably he will pick up something before his return."

During this visit his two two-year-old nephews, George Cambridge and George Cumberland, were submitted for his approval; but he spent most of the interview ogling their pretty young nurses.

After his departure, the Royal family settled down to face a depressing and uneventful winter.

In October Lady Erroll gladdened her father's heart by naming her eldest daughter Adelaide; but although the Duchess was kindness itself to her infant namesake, she was in very low spirits and still pined for her own baby. In the spring there was once again the promise of a child, and on March 8th the Duke told Lord Liverpool that the Duchess was perfectly well and much stronger than in 1820; but a month later he wrote pathetically to the King:

"it becomes my painful duty to inform your Majesty that the amiable and excellent Duchess miscarried yesterday afternoon of twins: I want words to express my feelings at these repeated misfortunes to this beloved and superior woman. . . . I enter not into particulars to your Majesty as Sir Andrew Halliday writes fully and professionally to Sir William Knighton. The Duchess has had a tolerable night and I trust in God will soon recover her strength and her health: I am quite broken-hearted."

After this bitter disappointment, William very sensibly and considerably suggested that they should revisit Meiningen. Their last foreign tour had been so enjoyable (at least, to him) that what could be better than to repeat it—though this time they would omit Hanover, with its sad associations.

In preparation for his tour the Duke took a house in Audley Square for the Misses Fitzclarence; and the Duchess found a Mrs. Harpur, "a respectable Lady who accompanies the elder daughters when they go into Company" to reside there. So that they should not feel that they had been ejected from the paternal roof, they dined daily with the Duke and Duchess at St. James's during the Season "when there is no particular engagement." It was noted in Society that "the Duke shows great attention to them."

Before leaving England Adelaide remembered to write to a solemn three-year-old toddler:

"Uncle William and Aunt Adelaide send their love to dear little Victoria with their best wishes on her birthday, and hope that she will become a very good Girl, being now three years old.

"Uncle William and Aunt Adelaide also beg little Victoria to

give dear Mamma and to dear Sissi a kiss in their name . . . and also to the big Doll.

"Uncle William and Aunt Adelaide are very sorry to be absent on that day and not to see their *dear dear* little Victoria, as they are sure she will be very good and obedient to dear Mamma on that day, and on many, many others. They also hope that dear little Victoria will not forget them and know them again when Uncle and Aunt return.

"To dear little Xandrina Victoria."

And dear little Victoria was very good and obedient to dear Mamma on that day and on many, many others: she was given no opportunities to be anything different. . . .

At the end of June 1822, travelling incognito as Earl and Countess of Munster, accompanied by two of the Duke's daughters, they embarked in the *Royal Sovereign* for the Continent. They took with them an English doctor, Dr. Beattie, ostensibly to minister to the Duke. William's real intention in taking him was to prevent Adelaide's falling into the hands of German physicians, whom he heartily distrusted.

Lieutenant Boteler, R.N., describes the crossing to Antwerp in his journal:

"Our crew were all old men-of-war's men, thorough seamen, of good character. . . . Our proper Captain . . . Charles Adam was in Scotland to be married, so his place was supplied by Captain Sir Jahleel Brenton. . . . The Table-decker, a sort of butler, having charge of the plate, and the cook came from Carlton House. . . . At the Admiralty Sir George told me that we were going to Antwerp with the Duke and Duchess of Clarence and the two ladies Fitz-Clarence, that I was to engage a respectable woman, sufficiently used to the sea to attend the ladies, and that she was to be entered in the ship's books as able-seaman. Consequently I went to Greenwich and secured the wife of one of the pensioners."

The Royal party embarked at Walmer.

"It was blowing fresh, and there was some difficulty in keeping the barge clear of the accommodation ladder, the yacht was rolling so. Sir Jahleel was . . . lame from wounds, and I had to step down the ladder. 'Take care of the Duchess, Sir.' Then:

‘Now, girls.’ They required no help, but skipped past me quick enough . . . it turned out an ugly night, blowing hard, with many squalls of rain, and there was much sea on. . . . The Duke, Sir Edward, and our Captain were on deck all night. The yacht . . . was a most excellent sea-boat, but she did kick and roll about famously.

“In the middle of the night I heard a squeal, divined the cause, and sent Mrs. Davis to the royal apartments. I watched for her coming out. And, ‘Well, what’s the matter?’ . . . ‘Well, Sir, the young ladies were pitched out of bed, and I found them in the lee scuppers rolling over each other.’ They were in George the Third’s bed—a standing four-poster. . . .

“As we reached the low sandy coast, the wind moderated . . . and we worked up the river . . . while this was going on, the two young ladies came on deck. One, Lady Augusta, was very beautiful, at least I thought so; such eyes and expression; I could not keep mine off her. I was indeed desperately smitten—mind! this was just sixty years back! I fancied she did not quite object to my admiration, so at a lull in working ship, I took courage and walked up to her, and was soon in full swing . . . and so we laughed and talked, when up came the Duke—‘Well, girls, what is Mr. Boteler talking about?’ ‘Oh, papa, he is admiring the Dutch scenery; the mud wall, etc.’”

They stayed for a short time in Ghent with the Saxe-Weimars, and again met Lady Bedingfeld, whose daughter Matilda made a pencil drawing of the whole party having tea in the garden.

On their way to Meiningen they visited the Landgravine and found her still delighted with her boorish husband. Ten days passed happily in Adelaide’s native land, where William’s mother-in-law noted with approval that he now drank nothing stronger than green tea; and then, leaving his wife at Liebenstein, off he went to Würtemberg in such haste that his carriage nearly overturned on the edge of a precipice near Stuttgart and Dr. Beattie thought they were done for. Fortunately, as if by a miracle, his professional services were not required. Had that carriage not righted itself in time, Queen Victoria would have reigned for seventy-one years.

He returned to fetch his wife on September 1st; and after a

short stay at Langenburg Adelaide enjoyed a few weeks' peace, picnicking and sketching at Heidelberg with the Queen of Württemberg, by whose changed appearance they were again rather shocked. Princess Augusta, who had visited her elder sister in the previous summer, had warned the family that she found her

"very large and bulky. Her face is very broad and fat, which makes her features appear quite small and distended. But what strikes the most is, that from not wearing the least bit of corset her stomach and her hips are something quite extraordinary."

By September 21st they were back once again at Antwerp, having revisited the Landgravine en route and been delayed at Brussels by another carriage accident. After three crowded months, which seem to have consisted largely of travelling at full speed on dangerous roads, the Duchess was not unwilling to re-embark in the *Royal Sovereign* for England, which she was by now beginning to regard as her homeland.

The next four years of Adelaide's married life were less harassing than the first four. Passing relatively uneventfully, they gave her time to deepen her friendship with her husband and to adapt herself to English life. She always wore English materials, spoke only English, employed only English servants, and with the exception of her lady-in-waiting, Mlle. de Hanstein, whom Lady Jerningham thought "very pleasing," all her friends were English. Yet despite her efforts to adopt the habits and customs of her husband's people, her newest daughter-in-law, Frederick's wife, unkindly told her friends that Adelaide was "sensible and good-natured, but had not one English idea in her head."

The rest of the family were less critical. Captain Fitzclarence told his friends that she was "The best and most charming woman in the world." She even bothered to befriend that well-meaning arch-bore the Duke of Sussex, and used to dine with him at Kensington Palace when William wouldn't go with her.

She did her utmost to keep on affectionate terms with the Duchess of Kent. This was not too easy, for Maria Louisa Victoria was jealous of her daughter's love for kind, understanding

Aunt Adelaide; and she was also prudish about the Fitzclarences, on whose supposedly contaminating account she tried to keep the little Princess away from Bushey. No wonder William disliked her! The Duchess of Clarence, however, refused to be drawn into a quarrel, continued to write to "dear little Victoria," and embroidered her a dress in coloured wools.

Adelaide did much beautiful needlework, and there were plenty of children to make dresses for, apart from her small Royal Highness of Kensington. The Duchess of Cambridge now had a second baby, Augusta. The Duchess of Saxe-Weimar stayed with her sister at Bushey in October 1823 for the birth of her son, William Edward; and the Duke of Clarence was by now a grandfather several times over.

In September 1823 the newspapers stated optimistically: "The Duchess of Clarence is said to be in that state which promises an addition to the House of Brunswick"; but once again their hopes were unfulfilled.

Having completed her embellishments at Bushey, Adelaide suggested to her husband that the time had come to effect some improvements in the dismal flat at St. James's, so that she could entertain for his daughters in London. Owing to her careful housekeeping, Clarence had not had to ask any financial favours since his marriage, so he wrote confidently to the King's secretary:

"His Majesty is fully aware of the inconvenience and unfitness of our present apartments here. They were arranged for me in 1809 when I was a bachelor, and without an idea at that time of my ever being married; since when (now 15 years) nothing has been done to them; and you well know the dirt and unfitness for the Duchess of our present abode. I earnestly request, for the sake of the amiable and excellent Duchess, you will, when the King is quite recovered, represent the wretched state and dirt of our apartments."

Considering the vast sums the King was at that moment spending on rebuilding the Pavilion, Windsor Castle and Buckingham House, he could hardly refuse this very modest request; and the result was the building of the present Clarence House, St. James's.



THE DUCHESS OF KENT AND PRINCESS VICTORIA, 1823

From an engraving after the painting by Sir William Beechey

The King invited his brother and sister-in-law to his house-warming at Brighton, which took place at Christmas 1823. The lion of this curious Sino-Moslem Gothic palace was not the Sovereign himself but his £600 bathroom "with pipes to conduct water from the sea." For sixteen years George had been unable to bathe from the beach because his figure was not up to standard, and this new invention seemed likely to solve his problem.

This visit was an ordeal for Adelaide, who knew few people and had no friends at this pretentious and tarnished Court, where there was no hostess save Lady Conyngham, irreverently nicknamed "the Vice Queen"; but it was not so bad as she anticipated. Most of the ladies had reached the age at which they preferred not to appear in daylight; so while William trotted along the Steyne, digging his naval friends in the ribs and giving pennies to round-eyed little boys, his wife was free to take salt-water baths.

On Christmas Day the King was "all gaiety, graciousness and nimbleness. He led in to dinner the Duchess of Clarence. . . . York followed with the Marchioness, grown much fatter, with twice the number of bracelets and rings." George expected his guests to enjoy their Christmas dinner as much as he did himself, with the result that on Boxing Day Clarence had "a *soupçon* of gout in his knee, the Duchess of Clarence *des crampes*, and fat Lady Erroll, who is a great dear, aches all over." Despite "the intense heat (which) makes us all languid," Adelaide appreciated the Cramer concert in the evening and the singing of Rossini some days later.

She made a very favourable impression. Lady Granville described her as "a very excellent amiable well-bred little woman who comes in and out of a room *à ravir* with nine new gowns, moving *à la Lieven* independent of her body"; and even Greville, who disliked her because she saw through him, and who always said she was ugly, admitted grudgingly that she had "good manners."

Her gentle sense of humour prevented her taking offence when other women would have done so. She once heard Lord Dudley, whose behaviour was odd if not downright impertinent, observe:

"What bores these royalties are! Ought I to drink wine with her as I would with any other woman?" Having decided that he ought, he turned to her with: "May I have the honour of a glass of wine with your Royal Highness?" to which she assented. Later in the evening he asked her again, and when she replied with a smile: "With great pleasure, Lord Dudley; but I have had one glass with you already," his Lordship was heard to remark: "The brute! and so she has!" On another occasion Lord Liverpool referred to her in Parliament as "a worthy and deserving object."

Adelaide was prepared to face a certain amount of unfriendliness in these uncongenial surroundings; but as she had made up her mind to meet whatever came with amusement and courtesy, her first stay at Court was a great success. Lady Conyngham, fortunately, was never jealous of slender women, and the King was uncommonly civil.

William returned to Bushey immensely proud of himself for having chosen a wife with such good sense and *savoir faire*, who had charmed everybody save the cynical Greville with her sincerity and kind heart.

Despite the magnitude of the hospitality offered by the King, the Clarences noticed a marked change in him. His former *jolie de vivre* and self-assurance had left him, and he seemed to be failing physically and mentally. He was, in fact, a very sick old man. Creevey noted in his diary:

"Prinney, whose inflammation . . . reached from his toe nearly to the top of his thigh, and who was already partially affected with delirium from the great irritability, upon his stomach being literally soused with opium and Bark Brandy and wine . . . recovers his senses, sleeps soundly, and shakes off his mortal enemy at a blow. His danger was extreme, but I presume he will now do again."

Greville, also writing in 1823, was more struck by his mental condition: "The King is subject to occasional impressions which produce effects like insanity; . . . if they continue to increase he will end by being decidedly mad."

The return and death of his wife had shown him how unpopular he had become. His old conceit, even his courage, had deserted him. As if ashamed of his bloated appearance and afraid of his subjects, he avoided London as much as possible and remained shut up with the Conynghams either at Brighton or in his Gothic cottage at Windsor.

His Ministers had the greatest difficulty in persuading him to do any work:

“ When the Ministers have any papers for the King to sign, they write . . . to Bloomfield begging him to get the King’s signature, and Bloomfield . . . has to solicit . . . the King’s valet, to seize a favourable opportunity.”

He closed the Terraces at Windsor to the public and locked all the gates of the Parks; and it was not long before the former Prince Charming was greeted on his rare public appearances with shouts of “ Damn the King, the Duke of York for ever! ”

During the summer of 1824 London was plagued by an invasion of importunate Irish, who had come over to find work, found none, and could not afford to return to Ireland. Well aware that the Clarences were more generous than the rest of the Royal family, they maintained a perpetual watch at the doors of St. James’s Palace and clamoured for alms whenever the Duke or Duchess went in or out. On one occasion Adelaide could hardly enter her carriage because of them. This caused her a good deal of distress and annoyance, and Clarence decided to take a holiday.

Of late he had been considering his own health. Since he had no child to wear the Crown of England, he decided to outlive the Duke of York and wear it himself; and hearing of the efficacy of the Ems waters and knowing that his wife wished to go to Germany for her brother’s wedding, he planned to combine health, pleasure and business.

His second daughter, Mary, had recently married Captain Fox, the extra-matrimonial son of Lord and Lady Holland, who had previously been jilted by her younger sister, Lady Erroll. His eldest daughter, “ Princess Sophia of Jordan,” was engaged to Sir Philip Sidney, and Adelaide generously suggested that they

should take the two younger daughters with them again this time.

Augusta and Amelia Fitzclarence, who were now twenty-two and eighteen, were delighted at the prospect of seeing and being seen in Europe; and it was a very joyful quartette who embarked in the *Royal Sovereign* in March 1825 at Woolwich for Ostend.

On this tour there were several departures from the usual plan. True, they visited Ghent, Meiningen and the Queen of Würtemberg at Deinach as usual. The rotund Queen was delighted with her guests:

“I am charmed with the Dutchess” (she wrote) “who is a most amiable woman, and whose only object is to contribute to my dear Brother’s happiness. Her conduct towards the Miss Fitzclarences does her the greatest credit, and I must say that both Augusta and Amelia are not only very handsome girls, but very pleasing, sensible and modest. I was also much pleased with Colonel George Fitzclarence; and felt quite unhappy at his not being a legitimate child.”

They also included Cassel (where the wedding took place) and spent two months at the Chateau-à-quatre-tours at Ems.

Here the régime which the Duke imposed upon himself seems drastic by modern standards. He took long and violent walks in the mountains, and if prevented from so doing by the weather, he did physical jerks in the drawing-room before an open window. He gave up green tea and drank nothing but sherry, and he never ate any vegetables. Despite or perhaps because of these efforts, he got a bad attack of asthma, and although Dr. Beattie was expected to cure him, the Duke always insisted on doing the prescribing himself.

When they arrived in Antwerp for the return voyage, they were all in such excellent spirits that they gave a dinner on board to “a hundred persons of the first distinction.”

Another departure from precedent, both on the outward and homeward voyage, was the company of the *Royal Comet*, a steam-boat which paddled ahead of the yacht with a tow-rope. When homeward bound in unexpectedly wild weather, this rope broke and the two vessels became separated. The suite, on board the

steamer, were paddled safely into the Thames; but it was only after causing the crew considerable anxiety and the Royal passengers much discomfort that the *Royal Sovereign* made Yarmouth under sail. Despite this *contretemps*, however, Adelaide felt so grateful for the assistance afforded by the *Royal Comet* that henceforward she never sailed the seas unaccompanied by a steamer with a tow-rope.

They reached London only just in time for Sophia Fitzclarence's wedding.

During the uncomfortable voyage from Antwerp to Yarmouth it struck Dr. Beattie forcibly that "to his illustrious partner no man could possibly have evinced more delicate and uniform attention than His Royal Highness."

Chapter 8 : *THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL, 1825-1829*

NEXT year, William, who thought (mistakenly) that he had derived considerable benefit from his self-imposed cure at Ems, decided to go there again and to see Holland on the way. On May 21st, 1826, therefore, accompanied by George and Amelia Fitzclarence and Lady Mary Fox, they again set sail in the *Royal Sovereign*. So pleased was the Duke with his discovery of the potentialities of steam-boats, that they paddled up the Rhine in order to avoid the rough roads. At Ems he again developed asthma; and, convinced that his version of the Ems régime did not suit him, Adelaide enticed him off to stay with her sister at Schwalbach. Then followed the usual round of family visits: to the Queen of Würtemberg at Stuttgart, to Mamma at Meiningen, to the newly married Duke and Duchess at their summer castle at Altenstein and to the Landgravine at Coblenz. They also saw Constance and Ulm and ended up with a visit to the battlefield of Waterloo.

The devoted Dr. Beattie was greatly impressed on this tour with the consideration they both showed to their attendants, and he records how on one occasion, when Adelaide pointed out to William that she thought the suite were bored, he sent them out to buy themselves fishing-rods!

Their arrival at Dover on October 1st marked the beginning of difficulties that, unknown to them, lay just round the corner.

When, in the previous year, the Duke of York began building his palace in St. James's (now the London Museum), Creevey had noted in his diary:

"This, for a gentleman in his 62nd year, without a sou in the world and owing at least a million of money . . . shows clearly that those who raise the money for him are confident he will get the throne."

But fate decreed there was to be no Frederick I; and by the time

the Clarences reached London they were told that the Duke of York had "been at the point of death several times from his legs mortifying."

None of his future subjects minded much when, in January 1827, he expired of dropsy.

"There has fallen this day, in our Israel, a prince, and a great man," quoted Sir Walter Scott mistakenly. His creditors (of whom Sir Walter was evidently not one) thought this panegyric singularly inappropriate; for although his debts did not, after all, amount to a million, they did amount to £150,000, and his assets only permitted a payment of one shilling in the pound to his tradesmen. The palace, which could not be abandoned half-finished on such a site, had to be completed at the public expense.

Under the circumstances a distribution of donations to his creditors might have been a more fitting memorial to him than his great column in Waterloo Place.

Brother Clarence had been justified in doing his physical jerks and in wearing his galoshes. . . .

The funeral was disgraceful. "Nothing could be managed worse; . . . the cold was intense, . . . the Bishop of Lincoln has died from the effects of it," criticised Greville; and Creevey gives additional sufferers: "Sussex had been one of the many victims . . . by catching cold in the Chapel. The Duke of Montrose has been at death's door from it, Roslyn is still confined, Wellington was very severely hit, and Canning's illness is from the same cause." Lady Williams-Wynn completes the tale: "Never was there anything equal to the fatal consequences which are still occurring. . . . The common soldiers have died to the number of half a dozen a day."

During this arctic ceremony Clarence was seen to turn several times to the shivering Sussex with the same observation: "We shall be treated now, Brother Augustus, very differently from what we have been."

And so he was. . . .

After much opposition, Parliament raised his allowance by £3,000 a year and granted £6,000 a year to the Duchess, the first separate income she had had; and as it was felt that some oppor-

tunity must be provided for the Heir Presumptive to take part in and learn something about public affairs, the old office of Lord High Admiral of England was revived for his benefit.

This carried with it the chairmanship of the Navy Council; and with his sea experience the Duke seemed well-fitted for such a position. He was conscientious in the performance of his duties and was much liked by the officers who were actually doing the work of the Navy. He pressed for the introduction of steam, and abolished the system by which promotion was awarded on party-political grounds. Like all other drastic innovations, his efforts were not at all well received in high quarters, and unfortunately the hands of those who opposed him were strengthened by the Duke's curious behaviour, which led people to believe he was going mad.

His newly acquired authority seemed to go to his head. During the diplomatic tension immediately preceeding the Battle of Navarino he sent off a postcard to Sir Edward Codrington, the admiral on the spot, inscribed: "Go in, my dear Ned, and smash these damned Turks!"—and all this without even consulting his Council.

The new office involved living in the Admiralty; and it was with regret that Adelaide once again left Bushey for inconvenient and noisy apartments in Whitehall. But no sooner were they settled into their new home, having seen Augusta Fitzclarence satisfactorily married to the Honourable John Kennedy Erskine, than the Lord High Admiral decided to carry out an inspection of the southern Naval Dockyards. He put to sea in the *Royal Sovereign* and desired his wife to accompany him. Adelaide, however, declined to cruise in the Royal yacht again without a steamer to tow her, and as the Navy was so anxious to ignore the existence of steam, this was clearly impossible. She therefore decided to travel overland from port to port, paying visits en route to the stately homes, the acquaintance of whose *châtelaines* she wisely desired to make.

So far, she knew very few people. Few ladies called. Nobody asked them to stay. Her oddly-assorted social circle consisted almost entirely of members of the Royal family,

retired sea-captains and decayed actors and actresses. Nor had she seen much of England.

In July the Duke sailed out of the Thames for Portsmouth, where he made a rather extraordinary speech. From there he went on to Plymouth, where the Duchess, who had come by way of Salisbury, Honiton and Exeter, joined him. She arrived late owing to the friendly (and delaying) reception she had received on the way, and it was late in the evening when they crossed the Sound in the Admiral's barge to Mount Edgcumbe, where they were to spend a few days. The beauty of that evening sail made a great impression on Adelaide, who used to talk about it many years later.

She brought with her a cousin, Princess Amelia of Carolath; and while the Duke went dutifully across to his office at the Port Admiral's each day, the two ladies were entertained with excursions in the neighbourhood, the most noteworthy being a sail up to Cotehele, Lord Mount Edgcumbe's other Cornish home. So friendly was their reception that in return they gave a garden-party at Mount Edgcumbe and a ball aboard the Royal yacht, and the Duke said he would come again next year and bring his mother-in-law to see the beauty of Plymouth Sound.

Unfortunately he made another extraordinary speech before departing, and the Duchess was glad to leave by road for Ilfracombe, while the Lord High Admiral set sail for Milford Haven by way of Land's End. She spent a night at Hatherleigh with Lord and Lady Clinton, with whom she afterwards formed a close friendship. Crossing the Bristol Channel in a steam packet from Ilfracombe and arriving at Milford just in time to listen to an even more peculiar oration, she was secretly relieved to hear that the cruise was to terminate suddenly so that they might be back in Town for Canning's funeral.

The Queen of Würtemberg was in London during the summer, staying at St. James's Palace. She was so huge that she had to be carried about in a chair, and the newspapers felt obliged to explain that "Her Majesty has been afflicted for many years past with a dropsy, which is the cause of her extraordinary size."

George IV was no more active than his sister, and remained in semi-hiding at Windsor. When he was forced to go to London

he went by night: "Prinney crept into town on Monday night in the dark, when nobody could see his legs or whether he could walk."

The Duchess of Clarence found she was expected to give huge receptions at the Admiralty. These were not considered a success by Society, and she was criticised for not mixing freely with the crowd; but considering the few opportunities she had had to become acquainted with anybody moving in official circles and how unhelpful the Duke always was on such occasions, it is really amazing that she mustered sufficient courage to undertake them at all. William further increased her difficulties by inviting every naval officer he'd ever heard of (a rather mixed bag sometimes), and then disappearing himself, only to be discovered in the pantry where the china was being washed up. Perhaps he distrusted large reception rooms, for at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in November a falling chandelier missed him by inches.

Winter over, William invited the Dowager Duchess of Meiningen to come over and admire his new grandeur. Adelaide accordingly embarked alone at Woolwich for Calais, where she met her mother and brought her back to England.

Louisa Eleanor spent the entire summer with her daughter and noted with approval the improvements made in the household arrangements since her former visit to London. As if anxious to atone for his enforced inhospitality in the past, William entertained lavishly for her. In June he gave a terrific *soi-disant* "Venetian Regatta" on the Thames below Waterloo Bridge on the anniversary of the great battle. Then they all made the promised excursion along the coast to Plymouth and back, and the Dowager Duchess returned to Meiningen much gratified and cheered by all she had seen.

All this passed off very satisfactorily and irreproachably; but when the Duke sent his sailor son, Adolphus, in one of His Majesty's ships to tour the northern capitals, nautical eyebrows were raised; and when he himself led the Fleet to sea without consulting or even notifying the Admiralty, and when it transpired that the King himself didn't know where it had gone, the Lord High Admiral found a stern rebuke awaiting his disembarkation,

and he was ordered by his justly angry Sovereign to resign his office.

So, in September 1828, to William's intense mortification and indignation they moved quietly back to Bushey and the office of Lord High Admiral was abolished. The nation was disappointed too, for they had been "glad to see the Navy kept outside political influence"; and his friends were convinced that his dismissal was due to his far-seeing innovations and rejection of political jobbery; but it must be admitted that the King and the Duke of Wellington, who was the first to advise the abolition of the office, had good reason for thinking that the Heir Presumptive was going off his head. Princess Lieven said many years later that, although she did not know it at the time, he was in a padded cell for a fortnight during the summer.

His much-tried and patient wife smoothed his ruffled feathers, soothed his hurt feelings and tried to interest him once again in rural and domestic affairs.

But after the glamour of life at the Admiralty, Bushey seemed to William rather dull and he felt depressed. The Queen of Würtemberg died in October at the age of sixty-two, and that made him feel that he was getting old. As Cumberland put it: "One cannot help feeling deeply when one branch of the old tree drops off."

He missed his children. Augustus, his youngest son, propelled by the devout Adelaide, had just taken Holy Orders, and became the rollicking Rector of Mapledurham. Only Amelia now remained under the paternal roof, and her matrimonial prospects were giving her father cause for concern. She had fallen in love with Horace Seymour, a widower with children, and as he'd settled everything he had on his offspring, the financial prospect was gloomy for Amelia, who hadn't a penny of her own. Clarence consented to the romance if Lord Hertford, as head of the Seymour family, would give Horace a donation. Lord Hertford refused, and the tearful Amelia was made to return all her love-letters.

There were plenty of grandchildren, however, to be parked on their kind step-grandmother when their parents found it convenient. Lady Sophia Sidney had also called her eldest daughter

Adelaide, so now three of William's grand-daughters were thus named. The Duchess always welcomed children gladly, and Bushey was like a vast nursery.

Prince George of Cambridge, now aged eleven, was sent to her from Hanover that he might grow up an Englishman; and she had practically adopted two of her sister Ida's children: Edward, who had been born under her roof in 1823, and Louise, the eldest, who was eleven and who was paralysed. It was characteristic of Adelaide that she should have taken this handicapped little girl rather than another member of the family.

The advent of Gabrielle, Baroness von Bülow, wife of the newly appointed Prussian Minister, was a great joy for the Duchess of Clarence, who was very fond of her and was godmother to one of her five little girls.

In the new year of 1829 Adelaide gave a children's ball at Bushey for the ten-year-old Queen of Portugal.

Only one little girl was not allowed to join these happy parties. The Duchess of Kent now feared the corrupting influence of the three baby Adelaides. . . .

Besides Baroness von Bülow, there was now another intimate friend in England. Lady Bedingfeld, recently widowed, had returned from Belgium, and had made her home in the Benedictine Convent at Hammersmith. From there she frequently drove over to Bushey to spend the day with her friend and future Queen. That the Duchess, despite her devout Protestantism, was no bigot was clearly shown in her close and enduring friendship with this loyal daughter of an ancient Roman Catholic family and by her subsequent choice of the Marchioness Wellesley as one of her Ladies of the Bedchamber.

Lord Erroll was living with his father-in-law in 1828, and he gave Greville a confidential picture of the Clarences' home life:

"The domestic habits of Bushey are of great simplicity. The favourite amusement of our future Sovereign being Pope Joan, at which he plays every night, but will never trust himself beyond the stake of one shilling. The Duchess is a great worker, and carries on that occupation by the land table, whilst Billy and the young ones go on with their Pope."

Gabrielle von Bülow, who often stayed at Bushey, gives a little more information. Guests did as they pleased between nine-thirty breakfast and midday, when the Duchess took the ladies for a walk. After luncheon at two the whole party would drive to Kew or to Claremont and other neighbouring country-houses. At five the ladies were invited to the Duchess' sitting-room to do needle-work and chat until dinner-time.

This restful, Arcadian life was not to endure forever. One depressing day the unwelcome announcement appeared in *The Times*:

"It is generally believed that the Duke of Cumberland will become a permanent inmate of the Castle. It is said that His Royal Highness and his august family will occupy that portion of the building called the Devil's Tower."

This was indeed a blow. Since the sinister Duke's departure from England in 1818, his unsavoury reputation had faded somewhat from the public mind; but no sooner had he returned than scandals sprang up like toadstools. First the Lord Chancellor's wife accused him of assaulting her; then worse stories were passed around; and in view of his sordid past nothing concerning him was too bad to be believed.

Again and again had the Commons refused him any kind of a grant; and when in 1825 they relented enough to give him £6,000 a year, ostensibly for the education of his son, Brougham observed in the House that the boy could be better educated for £100 a year at the new University of London.

In spite of, or perhaps because of, his unpopularity (for he was always hissed when recognised in the street), he settled down at Windsor and soon managed to obtain a hold over the disintegrating King, who made him Gold Stick. It was even believed that they shared some terrible secret and that Cumberland was blackmailing his brother.

George was now decaying rapidly. He sometimes had as many as 17 leeches on one knee simultaneously. Ignoring the hundreds of thousands of pounds which he had spent on restoring the Castle and on re-building "the new Palace at Pimlico" (as Buckingham

Palace was then known), he now refused to live in either, on the ground that they were "too public." He rarely moved out of the Cottage, and Lady Conyngham was reported to be getting very bored and anxious to retire from her anomalous position.

"He leads a most extraordinary life—never gets up till six in the afternoon. . . . He breakfasts in bed, does whatever business he can be brought to transact in bed too, he reads every newspaper quite through, dozes three to four hours, gets up in time for dinner, and goes to bed between ten and eleven. He sleeps very ill, and rings his bell forty times in the night; if he wants to know the hour, though a watch hangs close to him, he will have his valet . . . down rather than turn his head to look at it. The same thing if he wants a glass of water; he won't stretch out his hand to get it. . . ."

He was blind in one eye and nearly blind in the other. "He is in a great fright with his father's fate before him, and indeed nothing is more probable than that he will become blind and mad too; he is already a little of both."

Life at Windsor was as dull as it was in George III's time, and considerably more disreputable.

In August Adelaide received a birthday present from her niece, and although her reply shows clearly that things were not going smoothly between William and his sister-in-law, it is delicately worded so that the child should not become aware of the tension:

"A thousand thanks to you, dear Victoria, for your very nice and well-written letter full of good wishes, which I had the pleasure to receive yesterday; and many thanks more for the pretty gifts your dear Mamma has sent me in your name. I wore them last night for your sake, dearest child, and thought of you very often.

"It gives me great satisfaction to hear that you are enjoying the sea air. . . . I wish I could pay your Mamma a visit there and see you again, my dear little niece, for I long to have that pleasure, and must resign myself at being deprived of it some time longer.

"Your Uncle desires to be most kindly remembered to you and hopes to receive soon also a letter from you, of whom he is as fond

as I am. We speak of you very often, and trust that you will always consider us to be amongst your best friends. . . .

"God bless you, my dear Victoria, is always the prayer of your most truly affectionate Aunt

"Adelaide."

The Duchess' kindness to her niece had been, if possible, intensified by the Duke of Cumberland's reputed intention to do away with both Clarence and the Princess in order to get the throne himself. He was spreading the rumour that William was insane and unfit to rule; and there certainly did appear to be some plotting going on at the Castle. It was almost impossible for either the Clarences or the Duchess of Kent to discover anything, for the presence of the wicked Duke at the King's side made things exceedingly difficult for all three of them. He did his utmost to keep them away from Windsor; and most of the Heir Apparent's enquiries about the condition of the Royal invalid had to be made in writing through the doctor.

When William heard that Ernest was proposing to speak to the Lords against the Catholic Emancipation Bill, he decided at once to turn up himself and speak in the Bill's favour.

"The debate" (wrote Greville) "was very amusing. It was understood the Duke of Clarence was to speak, and there was a good deal of curiosity to hear him. Lord Bathurst was in a great fright lest he should be violent and foolish, but he made a very tolerable speech. . . .

"Clarence, Cumberland and Sussex got up one after another, and attacked each other (that is, Clarence and Sussex attacked Cumberland and he them) very vehemently, and they used towards each other language that nobody else could have ventured to employ; so it was a very droll scene."

In the summer of 1829 they took another Continental holiday, the last they were to spend together; when they landed at Brighton in the autumn on their arrival from Dieppe, they visited Mrs. Fitzherbert at the Royal York Hotel.

One day Lady Jersey (junior), the supercilious patroness of Almacks, suddenly realised that the King was going to die, and made a belated and overdue call at Bushey—and thought it very

extraordinary that the Duchess of Clarence, who was quite able to cope with the insult, expressed her surprise at a "pleasure so new and unexpected."

Otherwise William continued his uneventful life, surrounded by swarms of children and gargling daily. Although he was under the care of Sir Henry Halford for spasmodic asthma due to hay-fever, he was determined not to die before the King.

Chapter 9 : *WILLIAM IV—THE CONQUEROR, 1830*

"As betting is the feature of public opinion in this country, I will inform you that now the general bet is that Clarence is in a strait waistcoat before the King dies," wrote Sir Henry Cook to Lord Fitzgerald in the spring of 1830.

But public opinion was wrong. . . .

Early in the morning of Saturday, June 26th, Sir Henry Hallford, the King's physician, cantered along the Chestnut Avenue at Bushey to announce that George IV of singularly unblest memory had departed this life, and that Elizabeth, Marchioness Conyngham, "the daughter of one of the most opulent merchants of London," was already packing everything she could lay hands on in her apartments at Windsor.

When the Conynghams finally left the Castle they took with them mountains of luggage; and, wearing no mourning, they drove away through the Park so as not to be reviled by the citizens of Windsor.

Sir Henry found his Sovereign Lord, King William, taking a before-breakfast stroll among his flowers. He was obviously gratified to hear that his physical jerks and galoshes had not been in vain; but he refused absolutely to break the news to his wife, for he knew it would be most unwelcome to her. Sir Henry must do it. So Adelaide was fetched out of bed to receive the announcement she so greatly dreaded, and after presenting Sir Henry with the prayer-book she was reading, as a memento of his early-morning ride, she burst into tears. And no wonder!

Soon after this, the Prime Minister, Wellington, arrived on the same errand bent, only to find that the officious physician had forestalled him.

Mary Frampton states in her journal that when the Duke of Wellington arrived, the Duke and Duchess were still in bed, and the Duke, finding it was yet early, returned to bed, saying that he wished particularly to do so, "having never yet been in bed with a Queen!"

In any case, Wellington spent the morning at Bushey, while his Sovereign donned an admiral's uniform and practised reading his declaration to Lord Erroll. Then off they drove together to St. James's for William's first Privy Council at one o'clock.

The new King enjoyed his drive immensely, but the people whom he passed did not recognise him, nor did they know that George IV was dead; so his friendly bows and smiles were wasted on his apparently apathetic subjects.

When they arrived at St. James's he found it difficult to remember that he must not shake hands with his new subjects. He was most friendly to everybody. Walking up to the Chancellor of the Exchequer he said: "D'ye know, I'm grown so near-sighted that I can't make out who you are. You must tell me your name, if you please." The rollicking gathering was further enlivened by Mr. Buller absent-mindedly swearing in some of the Privy Councillors in the name of "King George IV—William, I mean." The Sovereign told his Council that he proposed to be styled Henry IX, but he obligingly withdrew his proposal when they pointed out to him that owing to an unsatisfactory prophecy about the next King Henry it was not a good idea.

"His first speech . . . was well enough given, but his burlesque character began even then to show itself. When they gave him the pen to sign the declaration, he said, in his usual tone, 'This is a damned bad pen you have given me.' His Majesty presided very decently, and looked like a respectable old admiral."

At five he left the Palace and returned to Bushey to tell the Queen and Lady Erroll all about it.

Next day was Sunday; so, as was now his wont, he attended church with his wife, the preacher rather inappropriately being his son Augustus. The Queen spent the rest of the day persuading him to patch up a quarrel with the Duke of Cumberland and in effecting a reconciliation between the latter and the Duke of Sussex.

Monday was Proclamation Day, and he drove again to St. James's to show himself to the crowd from a window.

"There never was anything like the enthusiasm with which he was greeted by all ranks" (wrote Greville); "though he had

trotted about both town and country for sixty-four years, and nobody ever turned round to look at him, he cannot stir now without a mob, patrician as well as plebeian, at his heels. . . . Never was elevation like that of King William IV. His life has been hitherto passed in obscurity and neglect, in miserable poverty, surrounded by a numerous progeny of bastards, without consideration or friends, and he was ridiculous from his grotesque ways and little meddling curiosity. Nobody ever invited him into their house, or thought it necessary to honour him with any mark of attention or respect, and so he went on for above forty years, till Canning brought him into notice by making him Lord High Admiral. In that part he distinguished himself by making absurd speeches . . . and by a general wildness what was thought to indicate incipient insanity."

Since his accession, however, Wellington reported that "he had done more business with him in ten minutes than with the other in as many days." He certainly surprised his Ministers by rising at six each morning and requiring all the messengers from the Government offices to be in attendance by that time; for he saw no reason why the ship of State should not be subject to naval discipline and regularity. His first reform was to change the naval officers' uniform, for he had vivid recollections of its many inconveniences. He next ordered Mrs. Fitzherbert to put her servants into mourning for the late King, thereby tacitly recognising her as his widow. As Maria was generally liked and respected, this was a very popular move.

The new King appeared to be enjoying himself so much that the Queen had to point out to him that as yet the massive corpse of his predecessor was uninterred, and he must in decency keep his happiness to himself a little longer.

The funeral took place on July 15th and the weather was so exceptionally beautiful that all the citizens of Windsor made a holiday of it. No one cared a hoot about George IV; in fact, everyone was delighted he was dead. The mourners noticed that the King, although dressed in profound mourning and dragging an immensely long black train behind him, "behaved with great indecency"; but this seems only to have increased his popularity

with his subjects, who were preparing to like their genial, rollicking old monarch.

Once the mortal remains of the late King were safely stowed away in the Royal vault, William IV drove to Windsor. His own barouche being the only carriage ready, "his gallantry to the ladies in attendance upon Queen Adelaide led him to mount the box."

He found plenty to do at the Castle. It smelt horribly of gas, which made the Queen feel ill, so the supply was cut off and lamps and candlelight restored. Many of the rooms were still unfurnished; and feeling that the art treasures which King George had bought cheaply in Paris just after the Revolution, and which had cost thousands of pounds of public money, should not become his private property, William made them over to the Crown.

He then turned his attention to the staff; and though he went personally into each case to ensure that nobody suffered hardship, he ejected all foreigners, including all George IV's French cooks ("but still his dinners are said to be properly handsome"). The late King's German band, which used to cost £18,000 annually, was replaced by a much smaller band in which all the players were English.

Then he considered the Park. He pulled down the famous Gothic Cottage where his brother had lived in disreputable isolation; and he packed off a collection of 150 animals to the newly formed Zoo in Regent's Park. Finally he ordered the Terraces to be re-opened to the public.

All these innovations were extremely popular, especially the last; for the good people of Windsor were now able to carve their names on the stonework and look in through the Castle windows and watch their Sovereign Lord having dinner. "Their majesties are accessible at all hours; the apartments are open to everybody; there is no seclusion, no mystery, nothing to conceal."

This publicity must have been very trying for the Queen; and it is comforting to know that, according to Baroness von Bülow.



PRINCESS ELIZABETH OF CLARENCE: STATUE BY SCOLAR AT WINDSOR CASTLE

By gracious permission of His Majesty the King

"She has a beautiful large room leading into a smaller one, which is the cosiest and most charming little place you can imagine. It is a turret chamber with glorious views from both windows. Most comfortably furnished and full of family pictures and souvenirs. The statue of her little baby sleeping her last sleep touched me more than anything else."

So well received were his reforms at Windsor, that the King went one better and ejected the Duke of Cumberland. During the previous reign the Duke had been allowed to keep his horses in the Queen's stables, and when he was asked to remove them to make room for Adelaide's horses, he replied "he would be damned if they should go." The King therefore had them removed forcibly and dismissed his brother from his office of Gold Stick.

In the previous February a certain Lord Graves had committed suicide on account of Cumberland's inordinate affection for Lady Graves; but while George IV was so completely under his brother's thumb, nothing could be done about it. King William, however, felt otherwise, and soon after his accession, at his own dinner-table, Cumberland being present, proposed a toast: "The land we live in, and let those who don't like it, leave it!" This had the desired effect, and the Duke withdrew to prepared positions at Kew.

This kind of incident added immensely to the King's popularity, but it distressed his gentle Queen; and she did her best to pour oil upon the troubled waters by inviting the Duchess of Cumberland and her son to Court. In view of all that had gone before, this was a genuine effort at reconciliation.

No sooner were their immediate domestic affairs settled than they were overwhelmed with public functions. The King, who realised that he was having a *succès fou* with the populace, obviously enjoyed these ceremonies, but to the Queen, who was always in terror lest he should do or say something preposterous, they were agonising. Like Greville, she was only too well aware that "he had considerable facility in expressing himself, but what he said was generally useless or improper."

Everyone who had known William in the days before his

marriage and who had not seen him of late, remarked upon the astounding improvement in his manners, but very little was known of the gentle little lady who effected the metamorphosis. "The Queen," recorded Greville, "is by no means delighted at her elevation. She likes quiet and retirement and Bushey, and does not want to be a Queen."

With the exception of Caroline of Anspach, who was too much of a bluestocking to be generally popular, and Charlotte of Mecklenburg, whose whole youth had been spent in child-bearing and who rarely appeared in public, there had been no queen at all since Anne; and the presence of a thirty-seven-year-old *châtelaine* at Windsor was welcomed with some curiosity.

A great deal was certainly expected of her if one may judge by a petition offered on her behalf by a Presbyterian divine:

"O Lord save Thy servant, our Sovereign Lady the Queen. Grant that as she grows an old woman she may become a new man. Strengthen her with Thy blessing, that she may live a pure virgin before Thee, bringing forth sons and daughters to the glory of God; and vouchsafe her Thy blessing, that she may go forth before her people like a he-goat on the mountains."

Her first public appearance was at a Chapter of the Order of the Garter. She wore deep mourning with a long court train and veil reaching to the ground. Gabriel von Bülow wrote:

"The veil suits the Queen's beautiful fair hair and white neck perfectly; indeed, I have never seen her more becomingly dressed than on Monday, when I was pleased to see how well she played her royal part."

There followed a tremendous week of official functions. In it the King held six reviews in different places and two levées, lunched with the Duke of Wellington, went to the Royal Academy and received innumerable addresses.

"The King received the addresses on the throne, which (having only one throne between them) he then abdicated for the Queen to seat herself on and receive them too. She sat it very well . . ." noted Greville—and indeed only a woman of great dignity could have got away with such an absurd situation. William enjoyed receiving addresses. "To the Freemasons he was rather

good. . . . When they came he said: 'Gentlemen, if my love for you equalled my ignorance of everything concerning you, it would indeed be unbounded.' "

At times, however, he overdid his geniality:

"When all this was over, and he might well have sat himself quietly down and rested, he must needs put on his plainer clothes and start on a ramble about the streets, alone too. In St. James's Street . . . he was soon followed by a mob making an uproar, and when he got near White's a woman came up and kissed him."

But this episode did not occur again.

"The Queen" (wrote Lady Williams-Wynn to her daughter) "has extorted from him a promise that he will wholly abstain from his perambulations about the streets, which certainly was a very worthy cause for her exerting that influence, which I have no doubt that she possesses over him, though she is withal much too prudent to bring it forward unnecessarily."

Adelaide would not allow her kindly, affable old sailor to make a fool of himself.

Lady Williams-Wynn was one of the first to realise that Adelaide was much cleverer than some people thought. For the times in which she lived, her education had been perfect. Had she been learned, like Caroline of Anspach, neither her husband nor his subjects would have appreciated it. Had she been sparkling and extravagant, like Henrietta Maria, she would not have been acceptable to a people among whom there was great distress and unrest, and who were beginning to require of a queen that she should work hard and set an example of an ordered life. In the past, provided a queen was faithful to her husband and devoted to her children, she was expected only to amuse herself and her court. But things were changing now; and another Queen Charlotte, with her narrow domesticity and her rare public appearances, would not have been at all welcome.

Adelaide's upbringing fitted her perfectly for her life work. Virtuous and devout, but tolerant of those who found it hard to be so, she was a perfect wife and would have been a devoted mother. Simple and economical in her tastes, she nevertheless

had a sense of what was fitting. She spoke English, French and, of course, German extremely well, was musical, painted in water-colour (she was the patroness of the first exhibition of the Institute of Painters in Water Colours), did beautiful needlework and rode superbly. She was cheerful and tactful and exceedingly charitable. What more could be asked of an early nineteenth-century princess?

In July they received a State visit from the King of Würtemberg. This necessitated more reviews and entertaining. William inspected the Coldstream Guards

“dressed (for the first time in his life) in a military uniform, and with a great pair of Gold spurs half way up his legs like a gamecock, although he was not to ride, for having chalk stones in his hands, he can't hold the reins.”

This caused some merriment in critical circles; and those who clung to established usage grew rather concerned at the Sovereign's democratic behaviour.

He refused to treat his old friends in any way differently from the way in which he treated them before his accession. When Sir John Gore and his wife lunched at Court, he handed Lady Gore to her carriage and stood on the threshold to watch them drive off just as he had always done at Bushey. When Lord Howe came to lunch he suggested that the Queen, who was going out driving, should give him a lift home afterwards.

“Etiquette is a thing he cannot comprehend” (criticised Greville); “he wanted to take the King of Würtemberg with him in his coach” (to the Opening of Parliament) “till he was told it was out of the question. . . . Yesterday he drove all over the town in an open *calèche* with the Queen, Princess Augusta and the King of Würtemberg, and coming home, he set down the King (‘dropped him,’ as he calls it) at Grillons Hotel. The King of England dropping another King at a tavern! . . . He ought to be made to understand that his simplicity degenerates into vulgarity.”

But ordinary citizens didn't mind a bit; and the crowd who, on the day of the Opening of Parliament, saw the Queen, who was

watching the procession from the garden of St. James's Palace, pick up Princess Victoria and hold her on the wall, were enchanted.

A few days later, at a review in Hyde Park, "a respectable woman fled in terror from the Life Guards to the royal carriage, was led to a place of safety by the Queen herself, and handed over to Colonel Fitzclarence." Whereupon the King exhorted his soldiers to "take care of the females" and drove home amidst shouts of "Good old Sailor King."

The King of Würtemberg must have thought the English Court very extraordinary indeed.

In August the Landgravine came to stay. William was asked by Edwards, his trainer, which of his horses were to be sent to Goodwood Races. Knowing nothing about horses and caring less, his nautical Majesty replied: "Take the whole Fleet; I suppose some of them will win"—which mode of selection proved very satisfactory, as three of the King's horses, *Fleur-de-Lys*, *Zingaree* and *The Colonel* came in first, second and third. The Court then moved to Windsor; and here on the King's birthday there was a dinner for 3,000 poor people. Already the labourers were beginning to feel the benefit of a new sovereign. Model cottages were going up, and the Queen used to visit them on Sunday afternoons, taking her guests with her. When she appeared, all the children came running out to her and she talked to them and patted their heads.

Creevey was present at the birthday dinner and describes it in his diary:

"The first carriage, open, contained the Queen and Betty Humbug" (alias the Landgravine) "on one side and Billy and Sister Gusty opposite with their backs to the horses." (The courteous old King always refused to sit facing the horses when there were two ladies in his carriage, even were one only a lady-in-waiting.) "At the entrance to the Park, Billy got out and walked through the crowd, and as you may suppose was not a little applauded. . . . Terrace and Flower Garden were open to all the world. We could hear the people saying perpetually, 'This is something like. . . . What a change! Who could ever have thought of this?'"

The whole Royal family drove in this procession to the feast, and when the Duke of Sussex recognised Creevey in the street, he "put his head out of the window, and at the full stretch of that gentle pipe of his, hollowed out, 'Oh you old Vagabond! What the devil are you doing here?'—to the great joy of the spectators."

Not content with his lavish hospitality to the 3,000, the King gave another, more *recherché* dinner that night in the Castle "to 200 persons of distinction." He thought nothing of asking forty people to dine; and the Treasurer of the Household became anxious when he discovered that on an average 2,000 persons weekly were being entertained at the Castle.

But life for King William did not consist only in driving about amidst the acclamations of his new subjects and in giving them dinners. George IV had left 48,000 signatures in arrears, and the Queen persuaded him to tackle them. This was very painful for his poor old hands; but each evening after dinner he gave up his favourite Pope Joan and dutifully and laboriously signed away, chatting to his guests the while. From time to time Adelaide bathed his fingers in hot water and Princess Augusta and the other ladies blotted the papers and packed them away.

Meanwhile the Queen had completed her Household, and her choice of ladies was her reply to the haughty lovelies of Almack's who had so pointedly ignored her in the past.

Her Mistress-of-the-Robes was Catherine Augusta, second wife of the 5th Duke of Leeds.

The Ladies of the Bedchamber were Emily Anne, wife of the 8th Marquis of Westmeath; Arabella Countess of Mayo; Anne Maria, wife of the 2nd Marquis of Ely; Frances Isabella, wife of the 16th Baron Clinton, with whom she had stayed on her tour three years before; Marianne, Marchioness Wellesley; and Emma Sophia, Countess Brownlow. Lady Wellesley was an American by birth and the widow of Robert Paterson—she was thus Jerome Buonaparte's sister-in-law. Lady Granville described her as "a very charming person, very handsome, with *l'air noble* and not a shade of her mother-country." Lord Glenbervie thought her "a remarkably showy woman, and elegant in her manners." The King always behaved with great courtesy to all his wife's Ladies.

Once, when Lady Wellesley was asked by a guest, "Do you come from that part of America where they 'guess' and where they 'calculate'?" the King replied for her, "Lady Wellesley comes from where they fascinate!"

Lady Brownlow, who had acted as hostess for her father, Lord Mount Edgcumbe, when the Lord High Admiral had paid his never-to-be-forgotten visit to Plymouth, has recorded her first meeting with the Queen after her accession. Not wishing to put herself forward, but at the same time desirous to express her loyalty and devotion, she wrote a little note and drove to Bushey to deliver it in person to the lady-in-waiting. The King saw the carriage out of the window, and came downstairs to receive her at the front door. He took her to the Queen's room, announcing simply: "My dear, here is Lady Brownlow," and went away. When the Queen offered her the position of Lady of the Bedchamber, Emma Sophia, who was newly wed, hesitated to accept without first consulting her husband, but the Queen said "it was not their intention to part husband and wife" and expressed the hope that Lord Brownlow would always come and stay at Court during his wife's waiting. When the King returned and was told by the Queen that Lady Brownlow had accepted, he said: "God bless you, ma'am."

Among the Women of the Bedchamber were Lady Isabella Wemyss, Lord Erroll's sister, "a most pleasing, lovely woman," Lady William Russell, Mrs. Hope, Lady Caroline Wood, Lady Gore, Mrs. Berkeley Paget, Mrs. Wilson. A little later Lady Bedingfeld was added to the list. This lady, of whom Princess Augusta wrote, "I never saw so agreeable a woman," and who had emerged from her convent to attend the Queen, was universally liked and respected (except by the Duke of Cumberland, who scented Popery!), and she remained the Queen's closest friend and *confidante* to the end of her life.

Although Adelaide required of her ladies that they should be virtuous and of untarnished reputation, she was not afraid to have pretty ones. The Maids of Honour were always leaving to get married, and when this occurred both the King and Queen liked to be present and sign the Register. When Miss Olivea de Ros

married in 1833 the Queen dressed the bride herself and gave her beautiful wedding-presents. She was succeeded by Miss Emily Bagot, a daughter of the British Ambassador to The Hague, whom Greville describes as "dressed like a soubrette and looking like an angel."

Adelaide chose Mr. William Ashley for her Vice-Chamberlain and Lord Erroll for her Master of Horse. John Barton, who had been in her service at Bushey and had helped her straighten out William's tangled finances, became the Treasurer of her Household. Colonel Fox, Mary Fitzclarence's husband, was her Equerry.

The most important appointment, however, was that of her Chamberlain.

Richard William Penn Curzon-Howe, Earl Howe, was a friend of some years' standing. He was thirty-five and very good looking. Miss Eleanor Stanley thought him "quite charming"; and Lady Granville described him as "so gentlemanlike and unpretending." He was sincerely devoted and loyal to the Queen and helped her deal with the more bewildering points of Court ceremonial, with which both she and the King were totally unfamiliar.

His wife, Harriet Georgina, had "a brilliancy, life and glowing animation that youth ought always to have, but so seldom has," but she was given to curious behaviour. When driving with the King and Queen on one occasion, she first rested her leg on her husband's knee (to his great confusion) and then stuck it out of the window. Adelaide does not seem to have liked Lady Howe overmuch; but as she did not wish husbands and wives to be separated on her account, frequently invited her to Court. She thought her sister Anne, Lady Bingham, "handsome, worldly and not overwise."

Mr. Davis was "the household medical man"; and perhaps to counteract Lady Bedingfeld's supposed papistical plotting, she appointed as her Chaplain Dr. Küper, the minister of the Lutheran Chapel in St. James's Palace.

It will be noticed, however, that there were no other foreigners; and never, even during the years when she was so unfairly attacked,

was she ever accused of having a foreign *camarilla*. She seems, indeed, to have been the first Queen of England against whom this accusation was never made.

Everybody praised the King.

“Our new King is daily gaining great personal popularity by his grace and kindness to everybody,” wrote Lady Williams-Wynn; and even the carping Greville admitted:

“The King’s good-nature, simplicity and affability to all about him are certainly very striking and in his elevation he does not forget any of his old friends. . . . He seems a kind-hearted, well-meaning, not stupid, burlesque, bustling old fellow, and if he doesn’t go mad may make a very decent King.”

And he omitted to add that, but for the wisdom and affection of his consort, he might have already gone mad and would certainly have made a very indecent sovereign.

Chapter 10 : *SEDITION, PRIVY CONSPIRACY AND
REBELLION, 1831*

*" From all sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion ; . . .
From Hardness of heart . . . Good Lord, deliver us."*

THE LITANY

AFTER all the junketing of this most successful season the Queen was tired; and the King left her in peace for a few days in August while he went to Brighton to inspect the accommodation at the Pavilion. He soon returned to fetch her, and, when they moved, he magnanimously threw open both Bushey and Windsor Castle to the public.

They were exceedingly well received at Brighton:

" The populace met the King and Queen on the road, and wished to draw the carriage; but the King would not allow the horses to be taken off, and called out to the people, ' You want to see me, and I want to see you, so you may depend on my going at a foot's pace, but I only request you to let the horses draw us.' "

The Queen looked forward to a quiet life and some sea-bathing; but the cup of popularity had gone to the King's head, and he couldn't stay put for long.

" He lives a strange life at Brighton, with tagrag and bobtail about him, and always open house," sniffed Greville; and indeed he was accustomed to drop in on his former naval friends at all hours of the day and ask them to dine the same evening. When their wives, who could not manage grand toilettes at such short notice, demurred, he would reply: " The Queen and myself are quiet people, and indeed she does nothing after dinner but embroider flowers."

Almost as soon as he arrived he called on Nelson's widow, whom he had " given away " at her wedding in the West Indies many years before. Next, he dropped in on Maria Fitzherbert, who had

formerly visited Dorothea at Bushey, and invited her to court. He told her he would continue her allowance of £6,000, and ordered her to put her servants in the Royal livery. She showed him her marriage-lines; and but for the objections raised by George IV's executors, he would have authorised their publication.

Maria admitted afterwards to her friends that on her first visit to the Pavilion she felt "composed"; but on the second occasion "the many reflections which then oppressed her mind very nearly overpowered her." The Queen evidently noticed this, and the following morning she received a kind little note from her hostess.

"Dear Madam,

"I hope you have passed a good night after your first going out and have not suffered from it. This fine day will enable you to take a drive which I am certain will do you much good.

"According to my promise I send you the Litography after my drawing of my niece Louisa.

"I was delighted to see you looking so well yesterday and trust we shall meet oftener next winter than we have done this year.

"Accept my best wishes for your health and happiness.

"Yours sincerely,

"Adelaide."

Recollecting Miss Wykeham, the "half crazy woman of large fortune" who had once accepted the offer of his hand (and who had, fortunately for England, been headed off by the Regent), the King conferred a peerage on her, as Baroness Wenham of Thame Park.

One day he met an old friend on the Steyne and asked him to dine that same afternoon. The friend made some excuse, and when the King had passed on, whispered to Sir Herbert Taylor that his real reason for declining the Royal invitation was that he had no breeches (*a sine qua non* at Court). Sir Herbert passed this information on to his master, who was heard to observe loudly: "Nonsense—ceremony—stuff. Let him come without, let him come without!"

The wholesome breezy atmosphere of the new Court contrasted strangely with the exotic night-life of the last.

The Landgravine passed the winter with her brother; and Princess Augusta was established in an adjoining house.

So kind and considerate were the King and Queen to their guests and suite "that it gave a home feeling to those about them." They breakfasted at nine, the Queen making tea at one end of the table and the Maid of Honour pouring out coffee at the other. In the morning the King worked in his room and the Queen rode on the Downs or shopped, and on one occasion was seen to pick up a reticule dropped by an old lady in a bazaar. After luncheon at two they went for a drive together. Sometimes the King took his favourite walk on the new chain pier, escorted by a crowd of children trotting optimistically along beside him, knowing that he would probably buy them toys and sweets at the little shops at the pier-head.

The pier was usually cleared prior to his daily stroll; but on one occasion an elderly *bourgeoise* got left there by mistake, and seeing the King coming, endeavoured to hide from him. "Madam, whither away so fast?" said the King when he spotted her. "May I not have the pleasure of making your acquaintance?" "Oh, your Majesty," replied the embarrassed lady, "I never thought of *your* being here or I should not have come!" "But since you are here, and we have met," said the King, "may I not have the pleasure of your acquaintance?" and the oddly assorted pair had a little chat on topics of mutual interest.

He always talked to everyone he met, whether he knew them or not. While her husband was thus happily engaged, Adelaide would drive to take the waters of Wick (now St. Anne's Well, Hove), which were considered efficacious in cases of sterility.

Nobody could accuse the new Sovereign of being too exclusive.

"Their Majesties invite such mobs to dinner at Brighton that I really read the arrivals at Margate t'other day by mistake for the list of their guests," wrote a humourist; but it was a fact that each morning the hotel managers were commanded to send their lists of new arrivals, the King marking those he thought he knew, so that they might receive invitations to the Pavilion. He was

sometimes mistaken in this, with the result that there were numerous gate-crashers who came in good faith, obeying a Royal command. On one such occasion His Britannic Majesty walked up to a nervous clergyman and greeted him with "And who the devil are you, Sir? I never asked *you*!" The abashed cleric explained that he had received a Royal command to be present; and later in the evening the King, who had obviously been feeling ashamed at his outburst, repaired the damage by proposing a toast "to the health of my new friend, the Rev. Mr. —, and to our long friendship!"

Tolerant though she was about these oddly assorted guests, there were two ladies whom the Queen felt unable to receive. One of them, Lady Aldborough, was wont to make such curious conversation that even the least squeamish of men used to blush when she favoured them with specimens of it. Of the other, the Duchess of St. Albans, Creevey (who nicknamed her "Old Blowzy") said, "a more disgusting, frowsy, hairy old B could not have been found in the Seven Dials." It was hardly surprising, therefore, that Adelaide felt as she did about them.

In order not to hurt their feelings she arranged that hints should be given to them in the hope that they would have the good sense not to appear at Court. Unfortunately they both attended her next Ball, and the Queen found herself faced with a difficult situation. Anxious though she was to avoid insulting them publicly, she was determined not to be bullied into receiving them; and she handled the situation so adroitly that, as the two frail unlovelies passed her, she appeared to be engaged in conversation with her sister-in-law and thus not to have noticed them.

This delighted Creevey, who noted gleefully: "The Queen would not let old Mother St. Albans come to her Ball at the Pavilion."

Nor would she invite clergymen or bishops to Court Balls or dancing *soirées*—though they were always welcomed at non-terpsichorean gatherings.

The months spent at Brighton were months of strain rather than repose for Adelaide; and when at a banquet at Lewes the King praised her publicly, so anxious was he that she should be

appreciated and share his popularity, she broke down and wept. She needed all her strength, for there were storms ahead.

In the autumn William quarrelled with his sons.

"George Fitzclarence wanted to be made a Peer and have a pension; the King said he could not do it, so they struck work in a body, and George resigned his office of Deputy-Adjutant-General and wrote the King a furious letter. They want to renew the days of Charles II, instead of waiting patiently and letting the King do what he can for them."

The King had already done his best for his children. Adolphus was Groom of the Robes and Frederick was an Equerry. Of his sons-in-law, Sir Philip Sidney, the Honourable J. K. Erskine and Colonel Fox were Equerries either to the King or the Queen, and Lord Erroll was Adelaide's Master of Horse. They were not content with this, however, and Greville noted: "His sons generally behaved to him with great insolence and ingratitude, except Adolphus."

"The irregular scions of a certain illustrious House are becoming troublesome," said *The Times* with delicacy.

This sort of thing distressed the Queen greatly, as did the news which reached Brighton in August of a revolution in France. It was an awkward moment when Charles X and his family, on board an American frigate off Spithead, asked permission to land in England. As most Britons regarded the French king as a tyrant of the worst type and were delighted he had been dethroned, the party was tactfully diverted first to Lulworth Castle, placed at their disposal by Cardinal Weld, and later to the Palace of Holyrood House.

Their plight made a deep impression on the Queen, who went to call on the Duchesse d'Angoulême in her modest apartments in Charles Street. Although more anxious than many of her subjects for a betterment in the condition of the poor, she had a profound distrust of any kind of precipitate upheaval and a horror of mob-rule dating from her childhood. She realised that the London mob had discovered its power to force the Government's hand at the time of Queen Caroline's trial; and she was considerably relieved that when the Court returned to Town for the

opening of Parliament in October, Wellington made it clear that he was opposed to any innovations in the franchise.

Public opinion all over the country, however, had been anxious for Parliamentary reform for some time, and had fixed its hopes on the new and democratically minded King. It had been obvious that George IV, influenced as he was by Cumberland, would never have agreed to any such measure, and the reformers had obligingly waited for him to die. They now felt that the longed-for change was overdue and that the time had come to agitate. Under the existing system of rotten boroughs and restricted franchise the country was governed entirely by a few landed families, and the rapidly developing middle-classes felt they were inadequately represented in Parliament.

At the same time the country was going through a period of post-war depression and the conditions of the labouring classes in both town and country were appalling. The Reformers, who do not seem to have treated their labourers any better than the Anti-reformers, took advantage of the resultant discontent to use the mob for their own ends, and persuaded the poor that Reform was the panacea for all ills, whether political or economic—which it wasn't.

Wellington's announcement that the Tory Government was against Reform provoked rick-burning in the country and riots in London. On November 9th the King was to attend the Lord Mayor's Banquet. The City magnates warned the Duke that feeling in London was so antagonistic that it would not be safe for him to attend it. The King then offered to take the Duke in his own carriage; but when it was rumoured that the crowd intended to cut off the gas lighting in the streets, the Prime Minister, who did not relish a rough drive in a black-out, advised the Lord Mayor to postpone the Banquet. The cancellation was attributed to the King's disinclination to face the mob, whereas it was in reality Wellington who urged him not to attend and "the Queen to the last was dying to go." Adolphus Fitzclarence had the cheek to ask his father to pay a bet of £100 which he had lost when he wagered that the King would go to the City despite the qualms of the Prime Minister.

On November 15th the Tory Government was defeated on a motion concerning the Civil List. On the night in question the King was giving a small dinner-party to a few intimate friends. "The Queen had on a particularly elegant white dress," wrote Miss Clitherow, who was present, "and all English manufacture. She made us observe her blond was as handsome as Lady Mayo's French blond. 'I hope all the ladies will patronise the English blend of silk,' she said." Miss Clitherow thought her Majesty had "a very pretty figure and her dress so moderate, sleeves and head-dress much less than the hideous fashion." Early in the evening Frederick Fitzclarence came in and told the Queen in German of Wellington's defeat—a great blow for her; but she made no observation about it, and the guests spent the evening watching the King sign papers, as usual. "It is the great secret at Court to smile and be cheerful and attentive to the circle round you when the heart is sad, and it was exemplified this evening."

Next day the Duke resigned and Grey was invited to form a Whig Ministry, which was virtually pledged to Reform.

There followed further difficulties about the Civil List. Parliament agreed to the Queen becoming Regent should any child of hers survive the King; and provision was made for her widowhood of £100,000 a year with Marlborough House. The King also made her Perpetual Ranger of Bushey Park, which gave her a country home of her own.

Although most of the members of the new Cabinet were prepared to offer her "an outfit" upon her accession, Grey was obliged to tell the King that he could not propose this in Parliament as Lord Glenelg was so much against it. Glenelg's objection seems to have been based on the assumption that as her jewels and trousseau were provided by the nation on her marriage, she did not need another new outfit. Even a man might have had the sense to realise that a queen could not appear in thirteen-year-old dresses, and that since her arrival in England such money as she was able to save by simple living had gone to pay William's debts and finance the Fitzclarences. It was only fair that she should now have something to spend on her apartments, jewels, clothes, stables and charities. Unfortunately, having been assured that

she would receive £25,000 (as was given to Queen Charlotte for her coronation), she had already spent £20,000.

When the King grasped that she would be criticised in the Commons for this, he very wisely paid the debts she had thus incurred out of his own pocket, and declined on her behalf to accept any outfit at all.

The Queen was exceedingly nice about this distressing incident, attributing it not to the meanness of the Government but to "the temper of the times"; and when it became known that the King had refused the outfit his popularity became even more apparent.

Although William's financial requirements were extremely moderate compared with those of his predecessors, the country was in so bad a state that the Commons were determined to reduce all Royal expenditure drastically.

Despite their lavish hospitality, the Household expenses were actually lower than for the corresponding period in the previous year; but William and Adelaide had to suffer for the extravagance of George IV. It was indeed hard that the first queen for a hundred years to live economically, dress modestly and care for the poor, should be the first to be treated as if she were a nineteenth-century Marie Antoinette.

During a debate in the Commons it was suggested that "if it were necessary for the Sovereign to go to sea he could go in a man-of-war. It was not necessary to maintain vessels painted and gilded like gingerbread for the purpose." The King found five royal yachts upon his accession, and as a consequence of this debate he reduced them to two. "The *Royal Charlotte II* was broken up, and the *William and Mary* and the *Royal Sovereign* became depot ships. This left the two largest, the *Prince Regent* and *Royal George*, and in 1836 the former was presented to the Imam of Muscat."

Characteristically this King and Queen, who were prepared to give and take, and who undoubtedly gave much more than they took, did not retire to Windsor and sulk about it. They remained in London.

As there was no palace for them except St. James's, which was far

too small and antiquated, they continued to live in their former home, Clarence House, which was made to communicate with the state apartments in the old palace. This arrangement was very unsatisfactory. The King observed that "they both find it inconvenient to be obliged to move all their books, papers, etc., out of their own sitting-rooms for Levées and Drawing-rooms because the rooms are wanted." It certainly was preposterous that it should be necessary. On the other hand, the King did not want to move into the still unfinished Buckingham Palace. Explaining that "all he and the Queen wish for is to be comfortable," he suggested that they should live at Marlborough House and build a passage to connect it with St. James's. He expressed his willingness to live in Buckingham Palace if the Government particularly wished it, but hoped "it may be plain and not much gilding, for he dislikes it extremely."

In November they took their two nephews, now eleven years old, to the play. Lord Lyttelton, who saw them there, wrote to his wife:

"Though the Queen is not pretty, I liked what I could see of her looks, especially her countenance. The two urchin Princes were right and left of the King and Queen, in little Hussar dresses. . . . Not altogether to my taste the Cumbrian one, but very likely it is prejudice; had to my eye a very conceited and disagreeable look. The other a quiet boy enough. . . ."

The Court returned to Brighton on December 18th, just in time for the wedding of Amelia Fitzclarence to Lord Falkland. They were married in the Pavilion by the Bishop of Chichester, and the bride wore a gown of "lace over satin with a veil to match, very pretty. She was in very high spirits and looked handsomer than ever."

At one of these parties Lord Dudley and Ward, with his unfortunate habit of uttering his thoughts aloud, was heard to observe when sitting next to the King: "What a change to be sure—cold *pâtés* and hot champagne!"

But less epicurean people preferred these jolly gatherings to the stuffy, dismal evenings they had passed in these same apartments with George IV and Lady Conyngham.

On Twelfth Night the guests were invited to draw lots to take the places of King and Queen. Adelaide drew her own rôle and Mr. Hudson, one of her pages, drew the part of the King.

At this time Greville wrote of his Sovereign: "The fact is he turns out to be an incomparable King, and deserves all the encomiums lavished upon him."

The fall of Wellington's Government caused William some anxiety. He disliked Grey personally and felt that the only person he could fully trust, apart from his wife, was the Iron Duke. This was curious, for it was Wellington who had been instrumental in getting him dismissed from the Admiralty.

The Queen, who realised better than her husband the appalling conditions in the country, sincerely believed that the Whig Ministry with its threatened Reform would precipitate a sanguinary revolt. She was not alone in her opinion either: "The Bill once passed, goodnight to the Monarchy," wrote Croker. Nor was she so far wide of the mark when she supposed a revolution to be imminent. All through the winter of 1830 incendiarism increased. The landed proprietors barricaded themselves in their country-houses for fear of their labourers and engaged small private armies to defend their estates. Many stately homes were attacked by bands of roughs from the towns. The London mob of 1830 was not a Derby crowd of 1930. Illiterate, violent, cruel, it approximated far more to the French *sans-culottes* of 1789. The half-starved and ignorant denizens of the terrible disease-infested courts and alleys bordering the Thames from London Bridge to Westminster were easily stirred up by irresponsible apprentices to acts of brutality and crime.

One December evening a mob of 10,000 men carrying a tri-coloured flag and calling themselves "The Trades of London" virtually besieged the King and Queen in St. James's Palace and refused to disperse without seeing the King. Revolution appeared imminent. When the King appeared at the window, however, they rather unexpectedly gave three cheers and marched off singing the National Anthem.

And in January Greville opined: "The King is ill. I hope he

won't die; if he does, and the little girl, we shall have Cumberland, and that would be a good moment for dispensing with the regal office."

During this illness of the King, the Queen, aware of his confidence in Wellington, was hoping for the re-establishment of the Tory Government; and in a private letter to Lord Howe, her Chamberlain, whom she trusted implicitly, she hinted that she was working for this and was doubtful of success. Howe showed the letter to Wellington, and the information it contained somehow leaked out, with the result that the Queen was ever afterwards believed to be using her influence with the King in favour of reaction. Actually all the evidence points the other way. Princess Augusta, who was at Brighton at the time, wrote to a friend: "The Queen never interferes and gives no opinions"; and even Grey himself admitted to his friends that, although she had improved the Sovereign's manners, she had no influence over him in other things. But it took Adelaide many years to live down the legend that she had a sinister and obscurantist influence at Court.

When Parliament met in February the King returned to London. The Queen preferred Windsor or Brighton, where she felt more secure; and when they got to St. James's, it was just as she had anticipated.

"The King went to the play . . . was well received in the house but hooted and pelted coming home, and a stone shivered a window of his coach. . . . The King was excessively annoyed, and sent for Baring . . . and asked him if he knew who had thrown the stone; he said that it terrified the Queen, and 'was very disagreeable, as he should always be going somewhere.'"

Like all George III's sons, William regarded this sort of thing as a normal if annoying occurrence, though it was certainly "very disagreeable" after his recent flattering receptions. Adelaide, however, saw it in its true light and found it very disquieting.

Two days later, she held her first Drawing-room

"at which the virtuous English matron introduced her beautiful offspring, fearlessly, into the fashionable world, and where the

manufactures of Britain were held up to the admiration of the noble and the wealthy."

The virtuous English matron had not been able to introduce her beautiful offspring fearlessly at Court since 1714. "Her Majesty" (who had expressed a wish that nobody should arrive indecently dressed), "wearing a splendid coronet without feathers, looking pale and tired, watched the King kiss all the ladies." She disliked feathers, which tickled her face when the ladies kissed her hand, and thinking them unnecessary, never wore them herself and discouraged them at Court.

Adelaide knew she was being criticised in smart circles for being modest in her dress. "The Queen is a prude," wrote Greville, "and will not let the ladies come *decolletées* to her parties. George IV, who liked ample expanses of that sort, would not let them be covered." That the late King's standards in matters of this kind were no criterion for a respectable Court, made no odds to the critics, who were out to find fault. A lady who saw them arrive to inspect the Tower of London wrote:

"The King is a little, old, red-nosed, weather-beaten, jolly-looking person. . . . The Queen . . . a little insignificant person as ever I saw. She was dressed, as perhaps you will see by the papers, 'exceeding plain' in bombazine with a little shabby muslin collar, dyed leghorn hat, and leather shoes."

Whatever the Queen did or wore was now wrong. If she wore old clothes she was dowdy and insignificant; if, after thirteen years, she bought new clothes, she was extravagant. What more could she do to satisfy her cantankerous subjects?

Though regarded as a prude by the intelligentsia, she was criticised by the ultra-fastidious for giving dinner-parties on Sundays and for not being sufficiently strict with her ladies. She certainly allowed them as much freedom as possible and encouraged them to speak to her frankly and informally; but in view of the conversational example set them by the King, how could she expect her maids of honour to behave as though they were in a nunnery?

Her big-mindedness is shown in her ability to keep her oddly

assorted entourage virtuous without being gloomy and mixed without becoming indecent. She reformed the Court by example rather than by exhortation, and only adopted a strong line over things she considered really vital.

Some sort of example was clearly needed in St. George's Chapel. The service lasted two and a half hours and the Dean mumbled and was so inaudible that it had become customary for the congregation to chat brightly during Divine Service. The Queen would not countenance this; and although she was unable to hear a word herself, she always behaved with exemplary devotion. Nevertheless she kept hidden on her lap a book of sermons, which she read reverently during the decanal exhortation. She also surprised her entourage by frequently attending Evensong.

The King was determined that his elevation should not deprive his children and grandchildren of his fireside, and now that it lay in his power to do something for them he did his best.

George Fitzclarence, described naïvely in the patent as "my natural son," was given his father's Earldom of Munster and became a Privy Councillor and Governor of Windsor Castle; Adolphus was given the command of the Royal yacht; and Frederick was made Governor of the Tower. Sir Philip Sidney was given a peerage in 1835, becoming Lord de L'Isle and Dudley; Erroll was made an English peer; and Lady Mary Fox became Housekeeper at Windsor Castle. Two sons and four sons-in-law were given offices in the Household; and all the younger children were given the precedence of the younger children of a marquiss and liberal financial allowances. In addition to this, they all came to stay at Court whenever they wished, just as they had done at Bushey, and parked their children on the Queen when it suited their convenience.

Nevertheless "the brutal conduct of the Fitzclarences towards their poor weak old father has gained for them the name of unnatural, instead of natural children." They were particularly unkind to the Queen.

"All the Fitzclarences dislike her" (wrote Greville), "and treat her more or less disrespectfully. She is aware of it, but takes

no notice. She is very civil and good-humoured to them all; and as long as they keep within the bounds of decency, and do not break out into actual impertinence, she probably will continue so."

Lord Erroll once spoke so insultingly of her in a coffee-house that the gentlemen present interrupted him with cries of shame.

But the next generation recognised her true worth. Lady Munster, one of Lady Augusta Kennedy's* children, who was born on the day after William IV's accession and to whom the Queen stood godmother, testifies in her memoirs to her kindness to her stepchildren.

"She was . . . a loving tender woman who seeing well the wrong, the pity of a thing, knew how, and when, to use her eyelids instead of her eyes—only opening them again to reassure and to sympathise. . . . I remember her kind acts well, and know what it must have cost her tender heart at times to see this beautiful family around her, and yet she ever loved them, and helped them with a mother's tenderness. . . . Her goodness to them lived on even after the King's death, until she breathed her last, and I am proud of being her godchild."

In March the King lost his son-in-law, the father of this little girl, and although he refused to attend the opera, he decreed that as his mourning was "private," public functions were to proceed as usual. The widowed Lady Augusta brought her children to Windsor.

Meanwhile the Reform agitation was increasing in violence. On March 1st, 1831, Lord John Russell introduced the Reform Bill and on April 19th the House of Commons rejected it. "I am going down to raise my broken and ineffectual voice against the Revolution," wrote Croker before this debate. Grey asked the King to dissolve Parliament so that there might be a fresh election. At first the King demurred, but when at last he was convinced of the necessity of so doing, he went so suddenly that there was no time to order out the Guards to escort him to Westminster; and they were in fact only just in time for the return journey. As there appeared to be some doubt as to whether the Royal coach

* Lady Augusta Fitzclarence married Hon. John Kennedy, afterwards Kennedy Erskine of Dun. She was referred to under both names impartially.

could be got ready at such short notice, he offered to go in a hackney carriage if need be.

"The King ought not properly to have worn the Crown, never having been crowned; but when he was in the robing-room he said to Lord Hastings: 'Lord Hastings, I wear the Crown; where is it?' When Hastings was going to put it on his head, he said: 'Nobody shall put the Crown on my head but myself.' He put it on, and then turned to Lord Grey and said: 'Now my Lord, the Coronation is over.'"

The King consistently refused even to discuss the question of the Coronation with the Prime Minister, saying that it was out of date, unnecessary and a waste of money.

News that he had dissolved the obstructive Commons soon spread around, and he had a tremendous reception on his drive home. That night London was illuminated.

"Portraits of William and Adelaide" (wrote Creevey), "sea pieces, flags without end for windows and tops of houses. . . . It is quite impossible to see the thing and not be perfectly convinced that the great mass of London . . . takes an intense interest in our Bill, so the Lord send it may answer."

That evening the King and Queen dined with the Duchess of Kent. Lady Brownlow overheard Prince George of Cambridge, who sensed that something unusual had occurred during the day, ask the Queen: "What has the King been about? Has he not done something odd?" To which the Queen replied simply: "The King can do odd things." William certainly took advantage of his prerogative in this respect.

Soon after this they went in state to the opera. Adelaide, being really musical, followed the score which was placed before her, while the King, who, like many of his subjects, found the opera intensely boring, slept serenely through the whole performance.

They were not allowed much leisure. On April 23rd the Queen, wearing "a magnificent crown of diamonds and a nosegay of diamonds," gave a Court Ball at St. James's. "Heaps of people of all sorts," sneered Greville.

At a Drawing-room held a week later a country débutante, who



KING WILLIAM IV, 1830

From the painting by Sir Martin Archer-Shee in the National Portrait Gallery

as a child had been invited to parties at Bushey, aware that it was customary for the King to kiss each lady who was presented, was so overcome with shyness that she passed him by without appearing to notice him. Whereupon William was seen to seize her hand, kiss her on both cheeks and observe kindly, "Is this the way you treat your country friends?"

The King's popularity for having dissolved Parliament was short-lived. On May 10th, when driving from St. James's to Windsor, he was roughly handled outside his own front door; and on the 14th the Royal carriage was greeted with hisses and groans at Brentford and the people threw earth in through the windows. The King leaned back out of sight, but it was noticed that the Queen bravely sat forward as usual and appeared quite unmoved at the antipathy of the populace. At a fête at Apsley House it was noticed that Adelaide was out of spirits. She had been "greeted with much incivility and rudeness" at a review in the Park that morning. The crowd made it clear that it held her responsible for the rejection of the bill by the Commons. "Truly enough might the King remark that he feared he had got into bad hands, when he sees that his own wife cannot escape from insult before his face," said Raikes.

The appearance of a number of republican newspapers and pamphlets advocating assassination and extermination of the landed families did nothing to lessen the Queen's anxiety. It was rumoured that she had persuaded her husband to plan an escape to Hanover on lines similar to the flight to Varennes; and the newspapers described her as "a nasty German frow."

The kindly old monarch, who was greatly disturbed by his wife's very natural alarm (Adelaide was not the kind of woman to stick her head out of her carriage window, as Queen Charlotte did, and give the mob a piece of her mind), did the best thing he could to cheer her up, and sent for her sister.

After a Drawing-room held in May the Queen sent for Lady Bedingfeld, kissed her, and told her that the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar would arrive in a few days with six children, and that Lady Bedingfeld was to go with Lord Howe and Lady Mayo to meet them at the Tower Stairs. Captain Fitzclarence went to

fetch them in the Royal yacht, and in due course the whole party arrived in London. The paralysed Princess Louise was placed in Lady Bedingfeld's especial charge, and from this time onward the little girl remained permanently under the care of her aunt.

In June the Court moved to Windsor for Ascot. The King hated racing, which bored him, and only his sense of public duty prevented him from dispersing his predecessor's stud. "It was rather a tedious day, the races following each other very slowly." Adelaide took her woolwork with her, at which of course a number of horsey people were offended. "The reception was strikingly cold and indifferent. . . . William was bored to death with the races, and his own horse broke down." But they refused to be driven into seclusion by the unkindness of their people; and that night they gave a dinner-party at the Castle. Between the races and the dinner the Queen rode in the Park, so the party was postponed until eight.

Adelaide was an expert horsewoman and frequently outrode all her ladies, always allowing them to go home when they were tired, and returning herself attended only by the men. Creevey records: "I was perfectly surprised at the Queen's pretty figure on horseback." These rides in the Park away from the carping judgments of her critics were a great solace to the poor little Queen and partly accounted for her affection for Windsor.

Greville was a guest at the dinner:

"Above forty people at dinner, for which the room is not nearly large enough; the dinner was not bad, but the room insufferably hot. . . . The Castle holds very few people, and with the King's and Queen's immediate suite and *toute la bâtardise* it was quite full. . . . The King drinks wine with everybody, asking seven or eight at a time. After dinner he drops asleep. . . . Directly after coffee the band began to play; a good band, not numerous, and principally of violins and stringed instruments. . . . What a *changement de decoration*; no longer George IV, capricious, luxurious and misanthropic, liking nothing but the society of listeners and flatterers, but a plain, vulgar, hospitable gentleman, opening his doors to the whole world, with a numerous family (all illegitimate) and suite, a Whig Ministry, no foreigners and no toad eaters at all."

These enormous dinner-parties were an almost daily occurrence. Miss Clitherow recorded that when she stayed at Windsor, 29 guests were sleeping in the Castle and that 35 people dined each day of her visit, and 40 on the Sunday.

The few evenings when there was no banquet were very different. Lord and Lady Grey were exceedingly bored when they were the guests of the Sovereign: "After dinner at about seven-thirty he (the King) sat in the drawing-room with his family. Those who wished played cards. The Queen embroidered or sewed. Princess Augusta played the piano, and the King nodded," was their description of the entertainment provided. "The Party is heavy—Lady Grey looks bored," wrote Lord Munster to Minnie Seymour.

Simpler people, however, enjoyed staying at the Castle. Miss Clitherow wrote to a friend that the King and Queen did not appear until after luncheon, so that the guests had the mornings to themselves. In the afternoons the Queen rode for three hours, and carriages were provided for those guests who did not ride. On Sundays she did not ride, but walked with her visitors for three hours round the Park in order to show them the gardens of Frogmore, the farmyards and model dairy, and her new labourers' cottages.

They were also taken to Adelaide Cottage, which the King had built as a tea-house for his Queen. Perhaps the memory of Queen Charlotte's cottage at Kew, where she had spent the first hour of her married life, had suggested to her the delights of a tea-house of her own at Windsor. Until this retreat was built there was no place in England that its Queen could call her own.

"The house is nothing but a very pretty Cottage *Ornée*" (recorded a lady who saw it in 1836) "containing three small but elegant sitting-rooms all on the ground floor. In one of the drawing-rooms were some beautiful specimens of Needle-work by the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, Lady Gower, Lady Isabel Thynne, etc. . . . One of the gardeners told us that the Queen sometimes brings a bevy of twenty ladies at one time, when they dine early (sometimes on the Lawn) and amuse themselves, 'some in reading, some in working samplers and things, some in walking and talking, and as they takes no notice of we, we takes no notice o' they,'"

The evenings that Lady Grey found so middle-class were delightful to less sophisticated people, who enjoyed looking at the Queen's portfolio of drawings. Sometimes she would take likenesses of the ladies, especially the lovely Emily Bagot, and Miss Clitherow records "The Queen draws extremely well."

Adelaide certainly welcomed these domesticated evenings, for she went in fear and trembling for the King's behaviour at large parties. Greville thus describes one such festive occasion:

"The other night the King had a party, and at 11 o'clock he dismissed them thus: 'Now, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you a good night. I will not detain you any longer from your amusement, and shall go to my own, which is to go to bed; so come along, my Queen.'"

But although she trembled at his loquacity, Adelaide valued his sincerity, and once observed wistfully to a friend, "How rarely you meet a simple man or woman in our great world!"

It was her own simplicity that appealed to the ladies of the diplomatic corps.

Besides Baroness von Bülow and the Countess Münster, both of whom were respected wives and mothers, she found an unexpected admirer in the Duchesse de Dino, niece and "housekeeper" of Talleyrand, the French ambassador. The Dino was not expecting a warm welcome at the English Court. The King detested the French and Louis Philippe in particular, and the Duchesse had a slightly questionable reputation; and yet she wrote of Adelaide:

"It is impossible not to be struck with the perfect simplicity, truth and uprightness of her Majesty's character. I have rarely seen a person more devoted to duty. She is both kind and cheerful, and though not beautiful she is perfectly graceful. The tones of her voice are nasal, but what she says is so full of good sense and real kindness that it is a pleasure to listen to her."

The Duchess comments also on the Queen's kindness to the wife of the Russian ambassador. Mme. de Lieven had once been very rude to her when she visited Almack's as Duchess of Clarence; and although the Princess said publicly that the Queen was far cleverer than was generally believed, Adelaide knew the Lieven thought

her *bourgeoise*, and it says much for her forgiving nature that she forgot the insult so readily.

Immediately after Ascot the Court returned to St. James's, so that the Queen could grace a bazaar.

"The collection of people in the room for the purpose of seeing her was so immense that the Stewards found it utterly impossible to conduct her in. . . . However, . . . Sefton . . . placed himself in front of her Majesty and began his march; the success of which is represented as having been miraculous—his constant and *loud* observation was, 'Ladies, it is as much as my place is worth not to make room for the Queen, and do it I must,' and do it he did, by forcibly taking them in handfuls and stowing them away as he could, and yet he was so full of his jokes all the time that the victims themselves were even in good humour, and so must our Adelaide have been, for being once landed in the place prepared for her, where Lady Sefton went to pay her respects to her, she kissed her. . . ."

That same night she gave a Court Ball.

On June 21st the King opened the newly elected Parliament.

"Lord Lansdowne said to the King, 'I am afraid, Sir, you won't be able to *see* the Commons.' 'Never mind,' said he, 'they shall *bear* me, I promise you,' and accordingly he thundered forth the speech so that not a word was lost."

Early in July the Reform Bill passed the House of Commons amidst public rejoicing and the Prime Minister had time to think about the Coronation.

The King had said he wouldn't have a Coronation; but Grey thought that there must be one, and persuaded the King that it was desirable. Owing to the condition of the country it was agreed to dispense with the banquet in Westminster Hall and to reduce the time of the ceremony and the cost from £240,000 to £30,000. When the Tory peers heard about the proposed retrenchment they threatened to boycott the Coronation on the ground that it would be cheap and nasty. When the King was told of this he remarked calmly, "I anticipate from that greater convenience of room and less heat."

On August 1st the Queen opened the new London Bridge. This auspicious occasion was also marked by the ascent of Mr. Green in his balloon. On the same day the Queen went to the House of Lords to thank Parliament for her dower.

A few days later Greville was sent to Windsor to settle with the Queen about her crown. It was proposed at first that she should wear the Crown and Circlet made for Mary of Modena, which are now in the Tower of London. It was then decided that they were not suitable and that another must be made.

"I was ushered into the King's presence, who was sitting at a red table in the sitting-room of George IV, looking over the flower garden. A picture of Adolphus Fitzclarence was behind him, . . . and one of the parson, Rev. Augustus Fitzclarence, in a Greek dress, opposite. He sent for the Queen, who came with the Landgravine and one of the King's daughters. She looked at the drawings, meant apparently to be civil to me in her ungracious way, and said she would have none of our crowns, that she did not like to wear a hired crown, and asked me if I thought it right that she should. I said, 'Madam, I can only say that the late King wore one at his Coronation.' However, she said, 'I do not like it, and I have got jewels enough, so I will have them made up myself.' The King said to me, 'Very well, then you will have to pay for the setting.' 'Oh, no,' she said, 'I shall pay for it all myself.'"

This was no sooner amicably settled than the King raised another stumbling-block. "He said he would not be kissed by the bishops, and ordered that part to be struck out. As I expected, the prelates would not stand it. . . . The King knocked under."

Coronation Day, September 8th, 1831, was cold and wet. "The kind and good King William went to the ancient Abbey of Westminster with scarce other attendance than that of his own people, and the thunders of their heartfelt acclamations." They were well received as they drove from St. James's, preceded by carriages containing their relations. William wore admiral's uniform and was greeted by the crowd with cries of "Good old Sailor King!"

There were two very notable absentees.

The Heiress Apparent and her mother were, curiously enough, in the Isle of Wight; and although the Duchess of Kent announced that her daughter was ill, everyone knew this to be untrue—in fact, the Princess laid a foundation-stone the very next day. The real reason for her non-appearance was her mother's insistence that she should walk immediately behind the Sovereign, whereas the King said she must give place to his brothers and sisters.

As the arrangements for the service had been made very suddenly many of the officials were not able to be present. The Duchess of Gordon acted as Mistress of the Robes for the Duchess of Leeds, and apart from two bedchamber women, Lady Caroline Wood and Lady William Russell, Lady Brownlow was the sole lady in waiting. It was her duty to fix the Queen's crown, which was small and intended to rest on a knot of hair piled high on her head, by inserting four long diamond pins in the holes provided for the purpose. Afterwards the Queen gave her one of the pins. Lady Brownlow noticed that although her Majesty's "feelings of devotion were very strong" she could scarcely refrain from smiling at the preposterous appearance of Lord Brougham, and after one glance never ventured to look in his direction again.

"The Archbishop mumbled. The Bishop of London preached well enough, indeed, but not so effectively as the occasion required." The King behaved "very awkwardly" according to Macaulay, and his bearing "made the foolish parts of the ritual appear monstrously ridiculous."

The Queen, who wore "gold gauze over a white satin petticoat, with a diamond stomacher, and a purple velvet train lined with white satin and a rich border of gold and ermine," and who carried a handkerchief of Honiton lace, appeared pale and nervous. But she took the service very seriously and made a tremendous impression on three curiously assorted spectators.

Macaulay wrote: "The Queen behaved admirably, with wonderful grace and dignity."

Gabriel von Bülow noted that

"though she is not too good-looking, she appeared so that day undeniably, for the beauty lay in something beyond mere outward loveliness. It was the beauty of her soul that seemed to shine out from and impress itself upon her whole person. Her bearing was full of dignity, repose and characteristic grace; she seemed deeply moved, and it was clear that her heartfelt devotion raised her above all outward surroundings."

The Duchesse de Dino, recording how, after the ceremony, everyone criticised the appearance and behaviour of everyone else, added: "The Queen alone is left untouched; everyone says that she was perfect; and they are quite right."

Chapter II : "TOUCH NOT THE NETTLE," 1832

*"Touch not the nettle lest haply it sting ye
Waly sae green as the bracken grows ;
Love not the love that never can win ye
For the bonds of love are ill to loose."*

OLD SONG

ON the Coronation night the King gave a great dinner at St. James's. It was such a success that he decided to give another, at which unfortunately he made an exhibition of himself.

"The talk of the town has been about . . . a toast he gave at a great dinner at St. James's. He had 90 guests—all his Ministers, all the great people, and all the foreign Ambassadors. After dinner he made a long, rambling speech in French and ended with a very coarse toast and the words 'Honi soit qui mal y pense.' Sefton said he never felt so ashamed." The comment of the French Ambassador was: "C'est bien remarquable!"

After a very crowded Drawing-room, at which some of the ladies fainted and had to be carried out, the Queen and her sister spent two days at the Pavilion settling in the lame Princess Louise, who was to stay there with Lady Bedingfeld. The Duchess Ida, who was never to see her daughter again, then returned to the Netherlands, leaving her in the Queen's keeping.

On September 21st the Reform Bill passed its third reading in the Commons, and the King was greeted enthusiastically by the crowd when, on the following day, the Queen launched *The Thunderer* at Woolwich. The Royal party lunched on board their old friend the *Royal Sovereign* and everybody seemed to have forgotten all about the proposed revolution. The King was especially popular at that moment, for he had just opened all the Royal parks. Before his reign Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, St. James's park, Windsor, Richmond and Kew were part of the sovereign's private garden, and, as such, inaccessible to the public.

At the end of September the Court moved to Brighton for the winter; and on October 8th the Reform Bill was rejected by the House of Lords.

The country was furious. Riots and disorder broke out everywhere. Nottingham Castle and the Episcopal Palace at Bristol were burnt down; and, fearing to remain in isolated country-houses, people came to London, thinking it safer.

Grey urged the King to create sixty new peers with Whig leanings, so that he would have a majority in the Upper House. This the King, sincerely believing it to be unconstitutional and a dangerous precedent, refused to do.

At the same time the Prime Minister asked for the dismissal of Lord Howe, the Queen's Chamberlain, on the ground that he was one of the peers who had voted against the bill. The real reason behind Grey's request was his belief that the King was indiscreet and that the Queen passed the information she elicited from him to the Tories *via* Lord Howe. There certainly was a leakage of information; but the Whigs were mistaken in blaming the Queen or her Chamberlain. Both were intensely honourable, and an examination of Wellington's letters shows clearly that it was not the King's wife but his children, particularly Munster and the Sidneys, who were picking up scraps of news and passing them on to the Opposition. Knowing nothing of Grey's suspicions, the King refused to dismiss Howe merely for voting against the bill, and said he was very useful to the Queen and helped her with advice in matters of etiquette.

Grey was nonplussed at the King's attitude, and after some consultation with his colleagues decided to see Howe himself and ask him to resign. This Howe agreed to do.

"The Queen had just come home from riding and was half undressed; Lord Howe sent to say he must see the Queen; she said she would see him when she was dressed; whereupon Lord Howe sent again to her, saying the affair was so urgent that he must see her immediately. She buttoned up her habit again and saw him; he gave her the key and said he must resign, which made the Queen very angry and rendered her still more hostile to Lord Grey's Government than she already was."

It was not unnatural that the Whigs feared lest the Queen, Howe and Lord Munster (who had also voted against the bill) should form a cabal at Court to influence the King against Reform; on the other hand, there was much to be said for the Queen's attitude. Howe had as much right as any other peer to vote as he thought proper, and in any case his office was not a political appointment.

Lady Bedingfeld said later that the Queen would have forgiven Grey for this if he had ever troubled to apologise for the affront; and Lady Howe herself told Greville that the Queen would have raised no objection to her Chamberlain's enforced resignation had Grey consulted her beforehand.

“The Queen is made ill by the worry which Ministers are giving her, and the King's inside is much upset by the same annoyances,” wrote Princess Lieven.

Upon Lord Howe's resignation, Adelaide refused to appoint a successor.

Something had now to be settled about the future of the half-finished Buckingham Palace. Like all George IV's building operations, it had cost a great deal more than Nash's original estimate; and in 1829 an exasperated House of Commons demanded an enquiry into the expenditure. This enquiry was still in progress at the accession of William IV.

The King would have preferred Marlborough House and proposed that the unfinished building should be completed as a barracks, in order to avoid “the necessity for billeting a large proportion of the men in the worst of public-houses, and of placing them in constant association with the worst members of the lower orders.” But a new palace was undoubtedly needed; and when it was decided to build Wellington Barracks instead, he reluctantly agreed to complete Buckingham Palace with the addition of some apartments for the Queen. George IV had made no plans for housing a Consort, nor was he interested in the quarters provided for the servants. Adelaide, who was always thoughtful for the comfort of those who served her, insisted on being consulted about the basement, and returned to London in

November for a few days especially to replan it with Blore, the new architect.

Even at Brighton the Queen was allowed no peace. The house-party for most of the winter consisted of two of the King's sisters, his brother-in-law, nephew, and four of his daughters and their children, some of his sons-in-law, Mlle. d'Este (Sussex' daughter by Lady Augusta Murray), and all their ladies-in-waiting, tutors, doctors, chaplains, secretaries and the like. There was also a general of ninety-five.

Each night there was a tremendous dinner-party: twelve guests in addition to the house-party was an average number. The evenings were "very pleasant and social. The Queen and the Ladies work. There is one card table and the Princess Augusta often plays the whole evening on the piano, always by heart. . . . The King amuses himself with making Lord Mayo sing Irish songs: he has no voice and sings quite out of tune." One night an eighty-five-year-old guest died while playing cards with their Majesties.

Meanwhile the Duke of Sussex had been causing the King considerable annoyance by his strange behaviour. After having been kept at arm's length by George IV, he had been welcomed back to Court by William and made Ranger of Hyde Park; and his son, Sir Augustus D'Este, became one of the King's equerries. Sussex was now anxious to exercise his newly acquired authority.

"The busy Blockhead" (wrote Creevey) "has taken to cutting down trees in Hyde Park, and is extremely indignant at Duncannon" (Surveyor of Crown Lands) "having stopt him. So to have his revenge, his keepers are shooting dogs all day in Hyde Park upon the ground of their running after the King's deer."

Lady Augusta Murray having obligingly died in 1830, he had just married Lady Cecilia, widow of Sir George Buggin, a city magnate. The wedding was performed at the lady's house, in Great Cumberland Place, so secretly that nobody knew whether they were really married nor not. The King was very displeased at both these efforts on the part of his brother, and it was not long

before Sussex' open adherence to Reform involved them in a quarrel so violent that it took the kind Queen three months to persuade them to become reconciled.

The Duchess of Kent was also making a nuisance of herself. When it became clear that Princess Victoria would succeed to the Throne, Parliament increased the Duchess' grant; and on the advice of her brother Leopold she took the opportunity thus offered to take her daughter to visit towns and private houses all over England. This was undoubtedly a desirable and even necessary part of the future Queen's education, but unfortunately the Duchess had not the wisdom to avoid the limelight; and the King, who, unlike his wife, was not a little jealous of the girl who would one day succeed him, was annoyed at what he called her "royal progresses."

He also resented the fact that the Princess was intentionally kept away from Court, although the Queen invited her over and over again. Not only did he want to see something of his niece, but he also wanted some say in her upbringing; and he resented the aspersions cast upon his former private life by the Duchess' refusal to allow Victoria to play with his grandchildren.

Dr. Kuper, the Queen's chaplain, made it clear to Sir George Seymour

"that he has no opinion of the Duchess of Kent's abilities or of her daughter's . . . the latter is educated as if her capacity was as remarkable as her own station."

"The Duchess of Kent has a really remarkable talent for giving offence whenever it is possible to do so," observed Mme. de Dino; and this was not all. Maria Louisa Victoria was determined to insist upon what she considered her rights, and would not wait for the King to offer her favours. She disliked sharing Kensington Palace with Lady Cecilia Buggin, and was continually plaguing King William for a re-orientation of her apartments.

"The Duchess of Kent . . . bothers the King's life out" (wrote Creevey) "with the perpetual demands she makes for alterations, additions, furniture, etc., in her Royal Residence. In

short, there is no end to her bother . . . she is the most restless, persevering, troublesome devil possible."

The Queen did her utmost to pour oil on the troubled waters; but all her advances were rejected by the Duchess, and the estrangement between the King and the mother of his heiress apparent became more and more painful.

Next, somebody, possibly Cumberland, started a rumour that Mrs. Fitzherbert was trying to convert the Sovereign to Roman Catholicism, that the King and Queen were on bad terms and that the Queen was proposing to return to Germany.

In view of all she had to contend with, it was most probably true "that the Queen is unhappy, and wishes herself back in Germany." She was exceedingly anxious about her mother's health and also that of the Princess Louise; but at the time when the unkind rumours were at their height she wrote to her sister-in-law: "My comfort and consolation is the extreme kindness of the King. Nothing can exceed it."

She had two other defenders.

Lord Winchilsea, who was later to marry the lovely Emily Bagot, was a man of liberal and philanthropic outlook on whose estates there had been no rioting or rick-burning during the previous winter. He had spoken in defence of the labourers in the House of Lords and said that they were not to blame for the upheavals. Now he came to the rescue of his Queen.

"The Queen's private character has gained, as it justly entitled her to, the esteem and attachment of this great nation. . . . Would to God I knew who this vile slanderer is . . . the cowardly detractor should never live to utter another vile slander."

This was received in the House of Lords with cheering.

In the Commons, Sir Francis Burdett, a Radical, expostulated "at the insults heaped upon an illustrious lady, whose sex and amiable conduct, since her arrival in England, have given her claims to the respect and protection of all."

In February 1832 they returned to London. Asiatic cholera had broken out in the capital. Grey advised the Court to go

to Windsor, but the King refused to change his plans, saying that he had “no apprehension of the cholera, and does not think it right to excite alarm by appearing to run away from it.” Then political questions arose again.

After receiving an address from the Bishops, the Queen was attacked for replying to it in a manner said to show hostility to the Government. The devoted old King defended her:

“The Queen’s answer was verbal” (he said), “and His Majesty believes as unexceptionable as possible. Nothing can, in His Majesty’s opinion, have been more cautious and guarded than the Queen’s conduct for months past. . . .”

Then the storm broke. On March 23rd the Reform Bill again passed the Commons, and in April was again rejected by the Lords. The King showed not the slightest concern at this, and was far more interested in the new bridge at Staines, which he and the Queen opened on April 25th. Three years before, as Duke and Duchess of Clarence, they had laid its foundation stone.

On May 8th, however, Grey once more asked the King to make sixty new peers, and told him that if the bill did not pass there would be a revolution. The King stuck to his refusal and replied that he didn’t care if there was. He would defend London, and the Duchess of Kent and the Princess Victoria might come in if they could—which was not very helpful.

Grey then resigned; and the King sent for his old friend Wellington and ordered him to form a Ministry. The Duke found it impossible; and the King, hissed as he left London for Windsor, found himself forced to recall Lord Grey.

Everybody who knew the true facts deplored the dilemma in which the poor old Sovereign found himself. They appreciated the fact that his refusal to create so many peers was based on scruples regarding his right to over-ride the Constitution rather than on his antipathy to Reform; and for this all reasonable people respected him. On the other hand, unless the bill became law soon there would clearly be a revolution.

It was, oddly enough, the Tory peers who finally removed the

impasse by agreeing not to vote on the bill at all, thus allowing it to pass without the necessity of creating new peers; and on June 4th, 1832, the Reform Bill became law.

That night London was illuminated and the crowd spent the earlier part of the evening breaking the windows of Tory peers and other citizens who had not lit up their homes. Despite the rough-house going on outside, the Queen bravely decided not to cancel her intended visit to the Ancient Concert in Hanover Square. She was accompanied by the Landgravine, who despised mobs, and was attended by Lady Brownlow and Lord Howe; and all went well, until, on the way back to St. James's, she found a seething mob in Regent Street. As soon as they spotted the Royal carriage the people began to insult her and yell "Reform for ever!" Strange as it may seem, the newly formed police force was not on duty that night; and as the Queen was unguarded, her footmen had to beat off the crowd with their canes to prevent people putting their heads into the carriage. The Landgravine was furious and the Queen very distressed and frightened.

Meanwhile the King, hearing all the uproar, paced up and down his room at St. James's waiting anxiously for her to come home. When he heard the carriage drive in at the palace gates he went down to meet her, and after listening to Howe's account of the drive, he was extremely angry and declared that he would cancel his proposed state visit to the City in order to show the Lord Mayor his displeasure at all the disturbance.

Throughout the whole agitation the King was desperately anxious to spare the Queen any criticism. Only he really knew how unjustly she was accused of interference; and in returning thanks for her health at a Drawing-room in May he said truthfully: "No Princess more deserved the respect and affection of those that knew her, for no one better discharged the duties of her position than she."

The King unwisely refused to give the Royal Assent to the Reform Bill in person on June 7th, and in consequence a stone was thrown at him at Ascot on the 19th; and when he drove to dissolve Parliament "people kept on their hats and the King spat

out of the coach.” It is not surprising to read that on both these occasions “the Queen looked depressed.”

There followed more family affliction. Sir Augustus d’Este, Sussex’ son, selected this ill-chosen moment to put in a claim to an earldom as the eldest son of a duke. This he undoubtedly was; but in view of the annulment of his parents’ marriage by George III his position was somewhat equivocal. His poor old father, now almost blind, was very troubled about it, and it annoyed the King considerably. So did a poem which appeared in *The Times* that summer with a refrain of:

*“Fly ye new-married
For crowds have miscarried
At sight of this dreary Duke.”*

The nobleman referred to in this literary effort was the Duke of Cumberland, who was at the time involved in a (for him) relatively minor scandal.

Adelaide probably felt that her brother-in-law deserved all he got and more; but her kind heart went out to his only son, who had just become blind as the result of an accident at Kew; and as it was second nature with her to care especially for handicapped children, from this time onward she made a second home for the twelve-year-old boy at Windsor.

Her especial protégé, however, was George Cambridge, who with his tutor, John Ryle Wood, lived permanently with her and always moved with the Court from Windsor to Brighton and St. James’s. Guests at the Castle were taken to see him “at gymnastics with half a dozen young nobility from Eton, who came once a week to play with him.”

“George Cambridge” (wrote the Landgravine) “does so well in England that those that love him must own the King and Queen’s education is perfect for him. . . . He is so well off under our most gracious Queen’s protection and care, that he is a most fortunate boy.”

He certainly seems to have had a far jollier time than his equally well-brought-up little cousin at Kensington Palace.

“The Queen has a real talent for entertaining children,”

recorded Gabriel von Bülow; "it makes me quite sad to watch her." What could be more entertaining to a child than to be taken round a Queen's bedroom, as was Princess Victoria, and shown all her treasures by none other than the Queen herself?

Lady Munster recalls the wonderful Christmas parties at Brighton, where the Queen erected a large tree in the Dragon Room decorated with gilded nuts and oranges and presents for everybody. Adelaide it was, and not the Prince Consort, as is generally believed, who introduced the Christmas tree to England.

She remembered to send dolls and tea sets (in the King's name) to greet little girls on their return home from the dentist; and even the boys at nearby boarding-schools who were unable to go home for the holidays were invited to play in the Pavilion, where the King was wont to drop in on them and inquire after their families.

So far afield did Adelaide's fame as a fairy-godmother-cum-governess spread that Don Pedro, ex-Emperor of Brazil, wrote asking her to undertake the upbringing of his little daughter, Maria de Gloria, Queen of Portugal. This, however, Queen Adelaide felt unable to cope with, basing her refusal on religious grounds.

The compliment may have cheered her a little during the trying summer; and it may also have afforded her some slight consolation to receive on her birthday a magnificent plum cake from a baker in Manchester.

But there was someone else who admired her, besides the ex-Emperor and the loyal Lancashire pastrycook.

In November the Court moved to Brighton for the winter. "Very active, vulgar and hospitable; King, Queen, Princes, Princesses, bastards and attendants constantly trotting about in every direction," wrote Greville, and he added a significant paragraph:

"Howe is devoted to the Queen, and never away from her. She receives his attentions, but demonstrates nothing in return; he is like a boy in love . . . it is impossible to ascertain the exact

nature of this connexion. Howe conducts himself towards her like a young ardent lover; he is never out of the Pavilion, dines there almost every day, or goes every evening, rides with her, never quitting her side, and never takes his eyes off her. She does nothing, but she admits his attentions and acquiesces in his devotion; at the same time there is not the smallest evidence that she treats him as a lover. If she did it would soon be known, for she is surrounded by enemies.”

Greville considered it very remarkable that Lord Howe should pay so much attention to the Queen “while his delightful wife is laid up (with a sprained ankle and dislocated joint) on her couch.” But although he considered Lady Howe to be so delightful, her eccentric behaviour compared very unfavourably with the dignity and restraint of her Royal mistress—and Howe had a conventional and courtly outlook.

The Queen was not yet forty—only four years older than her former Chamberlain; and although she was not so attractive to men as she undoubtedly was to women and children, it is significant that the only two men who came to know her well both loved her devotedly. Her loyalty to her husband, her isolated position and her natural shyness made it difficult for her to make men friends, and Howe was the only man whose office placed him on an intimate footing with her.

They had many tastes in common and held similar views on many questions. Each had suffered a good deal on the other’s account, and they had shared several painful occurrences. What was more natural than that the chivalrous Richard William Penn, who discerned Adelaide’s loveliness of heart and mind behind her reserve, should first pity and then love her? What more natural than that the Queen, who must have been desperately lonely, should welcome the devotion so discreetly offered?

Always so kind and loyal to her, handsome in appearance and charming in manner, Howe was the only presentable man with whom she ever came into close contact.

“She is so truly good and virtuous that she has no idea that people should fancy she likes him too well,” said Lady Bedingfeld; and the Queen, who had nothing to conceal, did not appear

to worry what people thought. When told by her ladies that the newspapers were attacking her on account of this friendship, she said "she knew that, but truth would always find its way"—and it did, for although Lord Howe remained with her until her death, nothing has ever come to light suggesting that either of them acted incompatibly with their honour or with the loyalty each owed the King.

So greatly did King William love and trust his wife that he definitely encouraged her friendship with Howe, realising perhaps that she found in it a contentment which he himself was unable to offer her.

This new element which had come into Adelaide's life did not cause her to neglect her duties as a Queen. At Christmas the new Turkish Ambassador was a guest at the Pavilion; and His Majesty caused the company some merriment by aptly describing the late Lady Jersey to him as "one of my late brother's Sultanas." At midnight on New Year's Eve everyone present kissed the Queen's hand; and the King's Most Excellent Majesty entertained the company by dancing with an ancient sea-dog, Admiral Lord Amelius Beauclerk!

The Reform Bill had passed. There had been no revolution.

Chapter 12 : THE QUEEN'S MOST EXCELLENT
MAJESTY, 1833-1835

*" Together we have now
Begun another year ;
But how much time Thou wilt allow
Thou mak'st it not appear.
We, therefore, do implore
That live and love we may,
Still so, as if but one day more
Together we should stay."*

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY HYMN,
George Wither, 1641

THE Queen was still without a Chamberlain. Grey had offered to recommend Howe's re-instatement on condition "that he should not oppose the Government, but was not to be obliged to support them. This he refused, and he regarded the proposal as an insult; so the Queen was not conciliated the more." When she found that this deadlock was worrying the poor harrassed old King, she at once agreed to appoint Lord Denbigh. She only allowed him to officiate, however, on the most formal occasions, and Howe remained with her, unpaid.

In February 1833 the Court returned to London, and Adelaide became anxious about the King.

Frederick Fitzclarence had been

"compelled to resign the situation at the Tower which the King gave him; they found it very probable that the House of Commons would refuse to vote the pay of it—a trifle in itself, but indicative of the spirit of the times and the total want of consideration for the King."

William was also feeling very sore that the Chapter of St. Paul's had declined to accept delivery of Chantrey's bust of Mrs. Jordan which the King had ordered especially for the Cathedral. He could not see why Dorothea should be excluded from the sacred

edifice when Peg Woffington had previously been admitted. The Chapter, however, were of opinion that two wrongs don't make a right, and remained adamant.

In March, Louise of Saxe-Weimar died, and was buried at Windsor; and about the same time someone started a preposterous rumour that one of the Queen's maids of honour "had had a child by the King and had gone to Italy with her mother to be confined." Adelaide kept her at Court all through the summer in order to vindicate her. No wonder that she felt sad at heart and anxious, and was not well enough to attend a dinner given by the Duchess of Kent in April, though she cleverly persuaded the King to go without her.

Soon after this Sir Thomas Hardy told a friend "he thought the King would certainly go mad"; and it was a fact that as each spring came round the Sovereign's mind seemed to be adversely affected.

He began behaving very oddly. At a private view of the Royal Academy at Somerset House, they were received by the President, who innocently pointed out a portrait of Admiral Napier. The King who, unknown to the President, objected to Napier because he had been in command of Don Pedro's fleet, replied unexpectedly: "Captain Napier may be damned, sir, and you may be damned, sir; and if the Queen was not here, sir, I would kick you downstairs, sir." It was perhaps just as well that the Queen was there.

In May they moved to Windsor and gave a ball.

"When the Royalties came out of the Supper room about half-past-one, a period when they generally retire to rest, Billy laid hold of his first love, Lady Sefton. . . . The Queen sent her Chamberlain to him repeatedly to ask if he would not go to bed, to which he always replied, 'Not yet,' and turning to Lady Sefton said, 'You know, I should lose you, Madam, in that case.'"

The Queen took this sort of thing in good part, and surprised her guests at the ball by her grace as a dancer.

"Adelaide is an excellent waltzer" (noted Creevey), "and she waltzed with both young Orléans and the Duke of Brunswick. . . .

When asked to dance, she replied that she could not if she was the only married woman, so the Dino was asked to stand up to remove this difficulty."

Although the Queen knew how to be gay when occasion demanded, she did not forget her charities. A certain fund "for distressed Germans and other foreigners of character" was in low water, and she proposed that a bazaar of the first magnitude should be held during the season under her patronage. She wrote to Hanover "to desire everybody would work"—which they evidently did to good purpose, for the Landgravine, who went to inspect the things, reported that "They have sent off seven large packages addressed to the King, to avoid the duty."

A generous subscription went from Windsor to the distressed Irish clergy; and even the lunatics in Hanwell Asylum were not forgotten, for although it was a rate-financed institution, the Queen gave £100 to open a fund which bore her name for the after-care of discharged patients.

Adelaide visited Princess Victoria on her fourteenth birthday:

"The Queen gave me," wrote the Heiress Apparent in her journal, "a pair of diamond ear-rings from the King. She gave me herself a brooch of turquoise and gold in the form of a bow." And there were lots of other presents too:

"Aunt Augusta gave me a box of sandal-wood. From Aunt Gloucester, Aunt Sophia and Uncle Sussex, a *féronière* of pearls. From the Duke of Gloucester, a gold inkstand. From the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, a bracelet of turquoise; and the Duchess brought me a turquoise pin from George Cumberland. . . . From George Cambridge, a brooch in the shape of a lily of the valley. Lady Mayo, who was in waiting on the Queen, gave me a glass bottle."

In the evening the King and Queen gave a children's ball at St. James's for the Princess and two Würtemberg princes who were staying with the Duchess of Kent. The King led his niece into the ballroom himself, and she was placed between the King and Queen at supper. Knowing that there would be a horrid confusion if the children were expected to dance quadrilles unaided,

Adelaide had wisely arranged for a Mme. Bourdin to officiate as dancing mistress. Like all the Queen's children's parties, this one was a great success; and the little Princess wrote in her diary joyfully: "We came home at half-past twelve. I was *very* much amused."

The Duchess of Kent ungraciously insisted upon leaving the ball early on the ground that her guests "had been to a review and were fatigued." As they were "six foot high and very stout for their age" this was deliberately insulting. As Maria Louisa Victoria had presumably invited them in order to consider them in the light of possible sons-in-law, it was natural that the King should also wish to inspect them; and Adelaide, ignoring the discourtesy of her sister-in-law, invited the two boys to spend a few days at Windsor. The Duchess replied that it was not necessary and that she could not spare them. The Queen noted with surprise, when she read her newspaper, that they had spent the day in question at the Zoo! The Duchess then whisked them off to the Isle of Wight aboard the *Emerald*, a cutter placed at her disposal by the King.

This deliberate insult to his Queen not unnaturally infuriated William.

"The King has been disgusted at the Duchess of Kent's progresses with her daughter through the Kingdom, and amongst the rest with her sailings at the Isle of Wight, and the continual popping in the shape of Salutes to Her Royal Highness" (wrote Greville). "He did not choose that this should go on. . . . They opened a negotiation with the Duchess to induce her of her own accord to waive the salutes. . . . The negotiation failed, for the Duchess insisted upon her right to be saluted, and would not give it up. As she declined to accede to the proposals, nothing remained but to alter the regulations . . . and from this time the Royal Standard is only to be saluted when the King or the Queen is on board."

Then came the bazaar for distressed foreigners.

"The Queen's stall" (recorded Greville) "was held by Ladies Howe and Denbigh, with her three prettiest Maids of Honour.

They sold all sorts of trash at enormous prices and made four or five thousand pounds."

In July the Queen gave some audiences to departing diplomats.

"The Mexican Ambassador, an odd, outlandish-looking man . . . came so near the Queen that there was not a foot's distance between their faces, and as she stood with her back to the doorway, she could not retreat. She mimicked him afterwards when talking to the Princess Sophia after luncheon."

Her birthday was celebrated at Windsor by a fête held in the famous Burmese Tents, which were brought out especially, as she had never seen them before. The Castle was so full of relations and intimate friends that there were no beds left. The Queen moved freely among her guests; "all she does in such a gracious, pretty manner," thought Miss Clitherow.

A few days later they celebrated the King's birthday with an entertainment at the Castle after his own heart. He invited everybody he had ever heard of, and the company was curiously assorted. It was noticed that on *this* occasion the Queen, "dressed much finer than her usual style," sat apart with the Royal duchesses and her ladies.

Early in September the Greys were again invited to Windsor; and told their friends afterwards that they were even more bored than on their previous visit. Lady Grey said that:

"The King and Queen and Duchess of Gloucester, Princess Augusta, Mrs. Lieven and herself had sat round a mahogany table for hours, the Queen knitting or netting a purse—the King sleeping, and occasionally waking for the purpose of saying: 'Exactly so, ma'am!' and then sleeping again."

Lady Bedingfeld, who was in waiting, also recorded that this evening "was heavy."

On the anniversary of his coronation the King gave a dinner in St. George's Hall to ninety people. There were 135 lamps in the room and 124 waxlights on the table, so it is hardly surprising that the guests found it exceedingly hot.

Late in September he received a state visit from the little Queen of Portugal. He was "at first very angry at her coming to

England, but when he found that Louis Philippe had treated her with incivility, he changed his mind, and resolved to receive her with great honour. He hates Louis Philippe and the French with a sort of Jack Tar animosity."

Maria da Gloria Joanna Carlotta Leopoldina Isidoro da Cruz Francisca Xavier da Paula Michaela Gabriella Raphaela Louisa Gonzaga, who was fourteen, was not as impressive as her name.

"Her features were small and childish; fat cheeks squeezing up her mouth; no expression whatever, no colour, and not fair, though with light eyes and hair . . . her voice sounded ugly and her whole manner was uncouth, as I could expect that of a Princess from the Sandwich Islands" (wrote Lady Bedingfeld).

At a *post mortem* held at the family breakfast-table next day when the King observed that she was very uninteresting, everybody present concurred, save Adelaide, who spoke kindly of the flapper-queen and said she would improve. She nevertheless twitted the blushing George Cambridge about her olive-skinned Majesty, who, she said, had come to fetch him, "whereupon he colours up and declares he will . . . go off to America."

After the departure of the Portuguese, who left Windsor in tears, Queen Adelaide suffered from a rheumatic pain in her side which affected her breathing. She retired to bed, slept fifteen hours, and recovered—showing how tired she was. But there was no respite. More guests came and went, and there were more reviews and banquets, a farewell dinner at Kew to the Cumberlands, and a day at Bushey, where she entertained a large party. Lady Bedingfeld records that September 24th was a "quiet day—only sixteen at dinner."

In the early autumn she was seized with lumbago at breakfast one morning and was in great pain "but laughed at it"—but she again had to go to bed for some days.

The Duchess of Cambridge was now the mother of a second daughter, Princess Mary Adelaide, to whom the Queen stood godmother, the Landgravine representing her at the christening in Hanover. "The child's dress amused me so," wrote the Landgravine; "a *drap d'argent*, all tied with pink bows, and an enormous

long train of the same all trimmed with fine Brussels lace." By this time there were innumerable little girls who owed their names to their mothers' affection for the Queen.

Early in 1834, after three years of hard work and disagreeable events, the Queen developed a bad cough which she seemed unable to shake off; and when it dawned upon the King that she needed a holiday, he decided to send her to take the Liebenstein waters. Knowing that she would refuse to leave him if he consulted her beforehand, he arranged every detail of the journey without her knowledge.

When at last the proposal was put before her, touched though she was by his kindliness, she asked leave to postpone her cure till later in the year, ostensibly so that her brother could come over to fetch her, but in reality because the King was already showing indications of going off his head, as was his wont in the spring-time, and she feared to leave him alone.

At the end of April he sent all the royal carriages to Lady Hertford's funeral—"the King's compliment rather a queer one, as the only ground on which she could claim such an honour was that of having been George IV's mistress," commented Greville.

William also became very irritable. When Jerome Buonaparte visited England and asked for an audience, the King refused to see him, and sent a message telling him to "go to the Devil." Possibly he had heard from Lady Wellesley of Jerome's treatment of her American sister-in-law, his first wife, whom, together with their son, he abandoned at Napoleon's behest in order to marry the Queen of Würtemberg's step-daughter.

On Princess Victoria's birthday the Queen gave a ball for her; but at the last moment the Duchess of Kent refused to let her daughter come, on the absurd ground that the King of the Belgians had just lost an infant. Adelaide offered to drive to Kensington to visit her niece instead, but the Duchess refused to receive her, because, she said, she was in such profound mourning. But she graciously accepted the Queen's invitation to bring the Princess and her step-brother and sister to Windsor for Ascot.

During this visit the Duchess was late for dinner and kept everyone waiting, as the Queen refused to go in without her. The King was heard to observe loudly before the assembled house-party: "That woman is a nuisance." Victoria, however, enjoyed herself vastly and "was very much amused at the races." George Cambridge, who, like his cousin, was made to keep a diary, commented briefly and with feeling "what a very disagreeable thing it must be to be a King."

At midsummer the King and Queen attended a series of concerts in Westminster Abbey which formed part of the London Musical Festival. During these relatively peaceful hours Adelaide thought things over, and began to feel that, much as she longed for Meiningen and liberty and rest, she could not leave her husband, who needed her soothing influence so much and loved her so dearly. It was a hard decision to make; but after the festival she announced her intention of remaining at home. But William wouldn't hear of it, and the preparations for her journey went on.

A few days before her departure they both dined at Boston House, Brentford, with their old friends the Clitherows. Owing to the King's hay-fever he remained in the house, but the kind Queen walked in the garden before dinner for half an hour, so that the haymakers, who were working in an adjoining meadow and were regaled with beer to mark the occasion, were able to stare at her. This "gave the natives time to get her dress by heart. It was very simple—all white, little bonnet and feathers."

People who remembered William's unregenerate days trembled for what he would do when the Queen had gone; and they were in no way reassured when at dinner, a day or two prior to her departure, he shouted across the table to inquire of an old admiral "whether he was as great a rascal as ever?" The admiral answered that the days of his follies were over—to which the King's Most Excellent Majesty replied "that for his part he meant to begin again."

On July 6th, towed by two steamers and escorted as far as Southend by the Lord Mayor and the members of the Thames

Yacht Club, the Royal yacht *Royal George* sailed from Woolwich for Helvoet Sluys with the Queen aboard.

Travelling *incognito* as Countess of Lancaster, she took with her Lord and Lady Erroll, Lord and Lady Brownlow, Lord and Lady Denbigh, Lord and Lady Howe and Miss Bagot. That she required eleven carriages for her journey and took presents for her relations seems to have provoked criticism from some of her touchy subjects; and Greville, who took the trouble to go down to Woolwich on the previous day to inspect (and censor) the preparations, remarked unkindly: "such luxury and splendour, and such gorgeous preparations. She will sail like Cleopatra down the Cydnus, and though she will have no beautiful boys like Cupids to fan her, she will be attended by Emily Bagot, who is as beautiful as the Mater Cupidinum. She will return to her beggarly country in somewhat different trim from that in which she left it, with all her earls and countesses, equipages, pages, valets, dresses, etc." And yet, had she travelled quietly across Europe with only a small suite and no finery, Greville would have been the first to accuse her of parsimony and shabbiness and of lowering British prestige. This was the first time Adelaide had sailed in the *Royal George*. A contemporary described her as

"The most elegant (vessel) ever seen. The cabin-doors are of mahogany, with gilt mouldings, and the windows of plate glass. Ornamental devices in abundance are placed in various parts, all highly gilt, and producing superb appearance";

and Farington, the artist, who had been shown the royal apartments twenty-five years before, had considered her

"fitted up in a very elegant manner. Every possible convenience was made with great taste. The whole of the main Deck was occupied with apartments. The Port Holes served as Windows. In the sitting-room, which occupied the whole of the Stern of the Vessel, there was a small library of French and English Books."

Adelaide would probably not have enjoyed reading the library which had been selected for the Regent; but she had no opportunity to read anything, for according to the standards of 1834

the *Royal George*, though imposing, was old-fashioned, rolled horribly and appeared to object strongly to being towed by paddle-boats. Her tonnage was only 330 and her length only 103 feet. A storm broke at the mouth of the Thames and the sole stewardess was immediately taken ill. The Queen had sent her dressers and all the other maids on another ship, because, with memories of previous North Sea crossings, she said they would certainly be useless.

The voyage was horrid. Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence couldn't find the way. All night long the *Royal George* rolled and creaked, and in the morning Lady Brownlow, feeling very shaky but knowing that the Queen probably felt worse, staggered to the Royal cabin to see if she could be of use. To her surprise she found the Queen up and dressed, "with her bag and dressing-box packed up as neatly as any maid could have done them," but she looked pale and tired and admitted she had spent a miserable night.

The yacht drew too much water to enter the harbour of Rotterdam; and while Lord Adolphus was wondering what to do next, the Dutch Royal yacht appeared with Prince Frederick of Orange and his wife on board, and they invited the Queen to sail with them to The Hague in order to see her sister, who was staying there. She therefore transferred in mid-ocean to the other yacht and told the suite to join her at Rotterdam the next day.

Before leaving England she had been exhorted by the King to avoid meeting either the Dutch Royal family (curiously enough, he sided with King Leopold during the War of Belgian Independence) or Princess Catharine of Würtemberg, who had married Jerome. Adelaide could hardly carry out his injunctions with regard to the House of Orange, since they had come to her aid; but she left Holland as quickly as possible for Meiningen, breaking her journey at the castles of Prince Frederick of Prussia and the Grand Duke of Nassau. The Queen was no friend of the Belgians—she disliked rebellions of all kinds; and this one cost her brother-in-law, Prince Bernard, his job as Governor of Ghent.

Liebenstein was only a mountain village, and there was not

much room for the suite. The Queen herself stayed with her mother in the Royal villa and had Emily Bagot with her. The rest of the party squeezed into a house opposite, which was really the annexe to the only hotel.

Each day they all dined at the nearby Castle of Altenstein, Adelaide's old home, now occupied by the young Duke of Meiningen and his wife. Lady Brownlow was shown

"a bedroom with a common floor and not a scrap of carpet. On each side was a small bed with white calico curtains; two small tables for glasses, etc., and a few light chairs formed the whole of the furniture; and this bare and comfortless-looking room, at which many a fine English maid would turn up her nose, had been Queen Adelaide's and her sister's till they married."

Lord Erroll also saw this apartment and described it as "a dog-hole that an English housemaid would think it an hardship to sleep in." The suite were amazed at the frugal and unsophisticated life of the little court; though they found it very friendly and pleasant.

The young Duchess was charming; and innumerable visitors came to pay their respects to the Queen. The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge brought their two little girls; and the Duke of Coburg arrived on horseback with his two sons, the younger of whom was destined to be the father of the next King of England. Other guests were Prince Edward and Princess Amelia of Carolath, the Queen's cousins; and Lady Brownlow noticed that they were the only royalties who troubled to attend the village Lutheran church. Punctually at eleven o'clock every Sunday, however, Adelaide joined her suite in the drawing-room at the annexe and made Lord Denbigh and Lord Howe read Morning Prayer and a sermon; and she always left Altenstein early on Sundays in order to return in time for them to read Evensong.

One day the Duke took them all to see the now empty castle of Meiningen, which struck the English ladies as very dreary. They were also disappointed that there were no gardens at Altenstein; and the Queen, who noticed this also, said she would send out an English gardener when she returned home, in order

to remedy the defect and plant flowers. Later on, she requested Sir Jeffry Wyatville to design a new *Schloss*, Altenstein-Altenburg, for her brother. She also left behind the money to rebuild two schools in the little town of her childhood.

They remained at Liebenstein for the birthdays of both the Queen and the Dowager-Duchess, on which day there was a dance as a sort of grand finale to this very happy holiday.

On the way home they visited the Landgravine at Frankfurt; and there they were told of some plot to insult the Queen *en route* evolved by the recently deposed and definitely dotty Duke of Brunswick, Queen Caroline's brother. The road was consequently guarded all the way to Mayence and Lord Howe rode in the rumble of the Queen's carriage. They took a river steamer down the Rhine to Helvoet Sluys, where Sir David Davis was awaiting her on board the Royal yacht. After her sufferings on the outward voyage, the King thought the attendance of a doctor necessary; but the return crossing was excellent, and the night so hot that the Queen and Lady Brownlow, tucked in by Lord Adolphus Fitzclarence, slept on deck.

She arrived in London on August 20th looking radiant, and was extremely surprised and touched at the tremendous ovation she received. Her people had missed her and were glad she had come back. Her old and faithful servant, Mr. Barton, insisted on meeting her as she disembarked, and got so excited at the enthusiasm of her welcome that he had a stroke. When she got to Windsor she found time to write him a personal letter of sympathy.

The King was waiting for her at St. James's Palace, and he was so glad to have her safely back that he kissed Lady Brownlow also. After lunch they left for Windsor, where a large party was gathered to celebrate William's birthday. "A swarm of grandchildren running about the corridor and all his daughters save Lady Mary Fox, who is abroad." The King and Queen used to play with all the children each day after lunch in the corridor.

During her absence her husband had disappointed the scandal-mongers by living most sedately at Windsor under the care of Princess Augusta and Lady Sophia Sidney; but he had missed his

Queen horribly, and she was shocked to find him "ill, depressed and exhausted, and hardly able to open his eyes."

During their separation Adelaide also found she loved him much more than she knew, and on September 4th they drove to London together to receive the City's congratulatory address on her safe return.

On October 17th they again went to London to see the still smouldering ruins of the Houses of Parliament, which had been destroyed by fire during the night, trotting among the shaky walls quite oblivious to their dangerous condition. The inability of the authorities to put this fire out led directly to the formation of the London Fire Brigade.

Early in November the Court moved to Brighton for the winter.

When the Queen returned to England she told her friends that she felt much better, and that the "oppression on her chest" was removed by a German medicine in which she had great faith; but she was never really given a chance to recover her health. She had arrived home just in time for the next upheaval.

While she was away, Lord Grey had resigned for reasons of health and had been succeeded in office by Lord Melbourne. Everything appeared to be running smoothly until, on November 15th, the King sent for Melbourne suddenly and for no apparent reason dismissed the Whig Ministry.

Adelaide was held responsible for the King's unexpected act.

"They attribute their fall to the influence of the Queen" (wrote Greville) "and fancy that it is the result of a preconcerted scheme and intrigue with the Tories, neither of which do I believe to be true. I am convinced that it is the execution of a project which the King has long nourished, of delivering himself from the Whigs whenever he could."

This seems to have been a true estimate of the situation. Lady Brownlow's account of the incident also exonerates the Queen. She explains that when the King decided to recall Peel from Rome to form a Tory Government, Mr. James Hudson, who happened

to be the Queen's Secretary, was the only suitable courier available, and that, unknown to the Queen, he was sent off to Rome to find Peel. Adelaide said later that the first inkling she had of the change of Ministers was when the King announced to her that Sir Robert and the new Cabinet were coming to dine.

But the Whigs would not believe this; and she was violently attacked in *The Times*, which told its readers "a foreigner was no very competent judge of English liberties, and politics are not the proper field for female enterprise or action." Next day a quotation from the same article, "The Queen has done it all," was placarded all over London.

If only the King had thought of making this uncalled-for upheaval two months earlier, his wife would have been spared all the consequent unhappiness. Her only cause for thankfulness was that it occurred while the Court was at Brighton and she did not have to face the insults of her obtuse subjects in the London streets. She still feared the worst: "I have only one desire," she said, "to play the part of Marie Antoinette with bravery in the coming revolution." No wonder Miss Clitherow reported: "She is most miserably thin, and has a sad, wearing cough."

Buckingham Palace was now nearly completed. Lord Duncannon had been entrusted with the fitting and furnishing, and had been exhorted by the King to keep down the cost. Creevey, who was staying with Duncannon at the time, relates how a letter was received from Lord Erroll saying that "the Queen wishes to employ the Irish," and how

"yesterday brought a collection of patterns for the furniture of the Queen's apartments in Buckingham House. Lady Duncannon and I were quite agreed about which she should have, but Duncannon would not hear of it, as being much too dear; he would not go beyond six shillings a yard."

Duncannon then replied to Erroll: "Having received the Queen's commands to furnish some of the apartments at the New Palace with Tabinet of Irish manufacture, he encloses two patterns selected from the parcel sent."

But the King was still averse to moving in to the Palace; and after the destruction of the Houses of Parliament by fire, he offered it to the nation as a Senate House. This generous offer was, however, declined, it being thought best to rebuild on the original site.

William was not the only person who disliked his new abode. Creevey was shown over it during the final furnishing:

"It has cost a million of money, and there is not a fault that has not been committed in it. . . . Instead of being called Buckingham Palace it should be the Brunswick Hotel. The costly ornaments of the State Rooms exceed all belief in their bad taste. . . . Raspberry-coloured pillars without end, that quite turn you sick to look at; but the Queen's papers for her own apartments far exceed everything else in their ugliness and vulgarity."

In the face of much criticism, however, the work went on.

The year 1835 began unhappily.

In January, Greville noted "Lady Alice (*sic*) Kennedy had sent word that the Queen is with child; if it be true, and a queer thing if it is, it will hardly come to anything at her age, and with her health." A few days later, a new aspect of the situation occurred to him:

"Munster told me the day before yesterday that . . . she is now between two and three months gone. Of course there will be plenty of scandal. . . . It so happens, however, that Howe has not been with the Court for a considerable time."

This cruel story was deliberately spread about by the Whigs.

"Lady Grey is a very horrid woman, passionate, bitter, Jacobinical, any you like to say bad" (wrote Mme. de Lieven, who did not believe this scandalous report); "she hates the Queen and says all the ill of her she can. . . . First of all it is ridiculous, secondly it is infamous. The wife of a Minister of the King trying to force a foreign Ambassadors to believe that the Queen is unworthy of respect. . . . When she saw that I did not believe her,

she told me to ask my servants. I replied that I never gossipped with them."

The fact that this information, which time proved to be false, emanated from her stepchildren makes them and not the Queen appear in an unfavourable light. Lady Augusta Kennedy had lived rent-free at the Castle with her three children since her widowhood, and her last child had been born there; it was astounding, therefore, that she should publish a story so disparaging to her generous step-mother. "We do hear from every quarter their conduct is abominable, and the manner in which they speak of the Queen unpardonable," wrote Miss Clitherow of the Fitzclarences; and if this rumour was broadcast with the deliberate intention of discrediting Adelaide in the eyes of her husband, it failed signally. When His Majesty read in the newspapers that his wife was to present him with an heir, he was heard to remark: "What damned stuff is this?"—and that was all. And he gave Lady Augusta and family a house at Isleworth next door to her in-laws. The Queen, who knew her to be *médisante*, must have been thankful to see her depart.

Fortunately Prince George of Cambridge was still living at Court; and his cheerful affection helped the King and Queen to ignore this unhappy episode. He was a jolly, normal little boy who loved the Queen and strove hard to grow up the way she wanted. She was trying to help him overcome his fear of riding, which worried him intensely. In January he noted enviously in his diary: "Lord Howe's little girl rode one of the Queen's large horses, which she had never seen before, and without saying anything, she mounted and cantered about the riding school."

The year which had begun so bitterly for Adelaide dragged on painfully. On February 25th the King was subjected to a bad reception on his way to open Parliament. The people were still furious about Melbourne's dismissal.

In March the Queen was called in to arbitrate between Lady Sugden, the wife of the new Irish Lord Chancellor, and the Vicereine of Ireland, who refused to receive her at Dublin Castle because there was some defect in her past. As Lady Sugden had

been married for twenty-seven years and had borne his Lordship fourteen children, the Vicereine seems to have been unnecessarily retrospective on her account. No sooner was this touchy question dealt with than the King gave a dinner to some naval and military officers, at which he made a very peculiar and inappropriate oration. After holding forth at length about the equal opportunity afforded to all classes in the Services, he illustrated his remarks with the observation:

"Here, on my right, is my noble friend descended from a line of ancestry as ancient as my own; and here on my left is my gallant friend, a rear-admiral sprung from the very dregs of the people."

But it was springtime and to be expected of him.

In April the short-lived Tory Government fell and the King was obliged to recall the Whigs. He nevertheless declined absolutely to have any social dealings with them at all, and refused to invite them to Court either formally or informally. When Adolphus Fitzclarence suggested that his father should give a dinner for Ascot, he replied: "You know I cannot give a dinner without inviting the Ministers, and I would rather see the Devil than any one of them in my house."

So there was no Ascot dinner that year; but Princess Victoria and her mother stayed at the Castle as usual for the races and the Heiress Apparent enjoyed herself immensely: "I was very much pleased there as both my Uncle and Aunt are *so very kind to me*." Indeed, things seemed to be going fairly smoothly between Windsor and Kensington. On Victoria's sixteenth birthday she received "a beautiful pair of sapphire and diamond ear-rings from the King, and a beautiful prayer-book and very kind letter from the Queen." In June they all four went to Eton Montem together, and on July 30th the King and Queen were both present at their niece's Confirmation in the Chapel Royal, St. James's. They both wept aloud, and so did the Duchess of Kent, at the Archbishop's singularly inappropriate sermon; and the Princess, wearing "a white lace dress with a white crepe bonnet with a wreath of white roses round it" was "drowned in tears and

frightened to death." To mark this solemn occasion the King gave her a set of emeralds and the Queen "a headpiece of the same kind."

A week later Prince George was confirmed in St. George's Chapel, and the Landgravine came over from Homburg to be present at both ceremonies. Another visitor was the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar. The Queen was especially anxious to meet her sister at Deptford on the Sunday morning of her arrival, but she stayed at home because "she felt she ought to go to church with the King."

The summer was busy with the usual round of state visits and fêtes; and as the King was far from well, Adelaide had to attend many of them alone.

Adolphus Fitzclarence gave Greville an account of his father's daily routine at Windsor about this time:

"He sleeps in the same room with the Queen; but in a separate bed; at a quarter before eight every morning his valet knocks at the door, and at ten minutes before eight exactly he gets out of bed, puts on a flannel dressing-gown and trousers and walks into his dressing-room. . . . He is long at his ablutions, and takes up an hour and a half in dressing. At half-past nine he breakfasts with the Queen, the ladies, and any of his family; he eats a couple of fingers and drinks a dish of coffee. After breakfast he reads *The Times* and *Morning Post*, commenting aloud on what he reads in very plain terms, and sometimes they hear 'That's a damned lie!' or some such remark, without knowing to what it applies. After breakfast he devotes himself with Sir Herbert Taylor to business till two, when he lunches (two cutlets and two glasses of sherry); then he goes out for a drive till dinner time; at dinner he drinks a bottle of sherry—no other wine—and eats moderately; he goes to bed soon after eleven. . . ."

But Adolphus did not know what went on in the King's dressing-room. Every morning the Kennedy-Erskine children were sent for to watch Jemmett, his old valet, who had been with him for years, wash the Sovereign's face. A large towel was tied round his neck, and he would place his white head over a large silver ewer. A bottle of rose-water was next solemnly uncorked

and poured over him. His head was then dried with another towel, and a rosy and sweet-smelling old monarch would don his coat and waistcoat, kiss his little grandchildren and go down to the breakfast-room.

How different this *bourgeois*, ordered life from the stay-abed habits of George IV!

Chapter 13 : "WELL DONE, OLD BOY !" 1835-1837

*" Let each of other's wealth
Preserve a faithful care
And of each other's joy and health,
As if one soul we were.
Such conscience let us make
Each other not to grieve
As if we, daily, were to take
Our everlasting leave. . . ."*

WEDDING ANNIVERSARY HYMN,
George Wither, 1641

THE King was now beginning to feel the burden of his seventy years, and all he wished for was peace and domesticity. Far from emulating the slack habits of his predecessor, however, he was anxious to do his duty fully, and continued to entertain his loyal subjects lavishly. On his birthday he gave a dinner to 150 people at the Castle "and a tea-party to as many more," and the Lord Mayor of London was invited to stay the night.

Nor did he wish his wife to withdraw from public life on his account. If ceremonies cropped up which were too strenuous for him, then the Queen must go alone. Together they paid a state visit to Greenwich in August, but he was not well enough to attend a magnificent fête at Syon House, so Adelaide had to go without him. She also went alone to Oxford, where she held a Drawing-room at the Angel Inn. From there she went on to stay with the Duke of Wellington at Strathfieldsaye. Among the guests invited to meet her was Sir John Cope, of Bramshill, the Duke's neighbour, who was a well-known radical and rather overcome at so unexpected an honour.

Describing the party he records:

"The Duke of course handed her into dinner and there were plenty of Lords to hand the Ladies, so that I was not wanted. Thirty of us sat down to dinner—uncomfortably crowded. The

very worst turtle soup I ever tasted, and the Punch as bad. . . . Dinner was ordered at half-past seven, but Her Majesty did not arrive till 8 o'clock. . . . Her Majesty was pleased to tell me that she remembered having seen my fine house. ‘Oh be joyful,’ thinks I to myself, ‘she won’t want to see it again.’ No more she did. . . .”

Meanwhile the Landgravine remained with the King. She also was getting too old to enjoy parties, but she was always ready to share family gossip and talk over old times.

When the Court moved to Brighton for the winter William’s asthma was so bad that he was not able to attend one of his favourite jollifications, “the sea officers’ dinner”; but he sent five immense “Pyes” instead, shaped like men-of-war.

He became more and more irritable; and at Christmas, exasperated by the slow progress and ever-mounting cost of the work at Buckingham Palace, he suddenly announced his intention of moving in forthwith. This caused great consternation among the contractors, and in order further to delay the Royal advent they suggested that the palace should first be lighted with gas. The King agreed to this reluctantly and postponed the move; and the gas took so long to instal that the palace was only just ready in time for his successor.

The behaviour of the Duke of Cumberland at this time was not conducive to family harmony. Early in 1836 alarming rumours were circulating about the mushroom growth of the Orange Lodges, ostensibly a no-Popery organisation flourishing under the ducal patronage. Many people believed it concealed a cleverly disguised plot to seize the throne for Cumberland on the ground of William’s alleged insanity, and to deprive the Princess Victoria of her birthright. The Duke was even credited with the intention of murdering his niece. So sinister did the rumours become that Hume brought up the question of the Lodges in Parliament, and the Duke hastily relinquished his connection with them; but that there was some foundation for these stories is shown by an episode which occurred about this time at Windsor.

The Queen was ill and Cumberland was dining with his brother, both of them being slightly under the weather. After proposing

the Sovereign's health, Ernest raised his glass and drank to "the King's heir, and God bless him." This was more than His Britannic Majesty could stand, and pulling himself together, he glowered at his guest, and himself proposed the toast: "The King's heir, God bless *her*!"; adding, "My crown came with a lass, and my crown will go to a lass."

In March the Duchess of Kent again had two nephews staying at Kensington Palace, this time Coburgs; and as the elder, Ferdinand, was on his way to Lisbon to marry Maria da Gloria, the King gave a ball at Windsor for them, and invited the whole party to stay at the Castle for some days. The Queen took great pains to make the visit a success; and the Landgravine, who couldn't face the festivities, wrote: "I hear the Castle literally looked like a fairy palace, so magnificent, so gay, so full of people, above 250 lodged." Adelaide certainly did her utmost to conciliate the Duchess of Kent on this occasion. On the morning after the ball she invited the Princess and her mother into her room, where they "looked at some of her many pretty things," and later in the day she took them to a meet of her buckhounds.

After the house-party of 250 it is not surprising to hear that "the Queen has been really unwell since the Drawing-room after the visit of the Prince of Portugal." Drawing-rooms tired her at any time, and she used to bandage her knees to relieve the strain of standing. This time she was completely exhausted; but she was never too ill to answer begging letters, and during the year she persuaded the King to build a church for the people of the Scilly Isles, whose former medieval church had been destroyed in a great storm. He also gave £3,000 towards the enlargement of Kew church to provide 200 free seats; and £1,000, with £300 from the Queen, to the Bishop of London's Appeal for new churches in the East End.

From the day when, as a young officer, meeting an old down-and-out shipmate in the street, he stopped him and refitted him at an old-clothes shop, pledging his gold watch as he had not enough money, William had always been generous-hearted, but had never had enough funds at his disposal to be able to give much

away. Now that he had it in his power, however, he made up for lost time. There were fewer charities in those days than there are to-day, and those there were were mainly promoted by the Anglican Church. It was to the Church, therefore, that a liberal proportion of the King's private income went. This royal benevolence, largely due to the influence of the Queen, contrasted favourably with the stinginess of the last reign.

Adelaide's investigations into the appalling difficulties with which the few scattered East End clergy had to contend, drew her attention to the distress of the Spitalfields silk-weavers; and although she had always done her utmost to promote the wearing of English materials, she immediately ordered enough silk to make twelve dresses for her own use, explaining that

“in making this order the Queen confidently hopes that her Majesty's countrywomen, feeling equal compassion with herself for these suffering and industrious classes, will endeavour by the encouragement of their trade, to alleviate the pressure under which they are now labouring.”

She also announced her intention to promote a Charity Ball on June 1st at which everyone was to wear Spitalfields silk. Owing to illness on the day of the ball she was unable to be present, but sent a donation of £100, and the result was £4,000 for the distressed weavers. A few months later the newspapers reported “The laudable example of her Majesty has been followed by many ladies of distinguished rank; and the modists . . . are busily engaged in making dresses entirely composed of British manufacture.”

So successful was this *démarche*, that the distressed Coventry ribbon-makers wrote begging the Queen to show her preference for Coventry ribbons. To their fund she sent £50; but when the Worcester glove-makers optimistically followed suit, she replied that she always wore Worcester gloves, and Lord Howe pointed out tactfully to the deputation that the Queen could not undertake to become a mobile British Industries Exhibition. She always did her utmost to help British manufactures, however. From Honiton she ordered a lace dress with a design of Amaranth,

Daphne, Eglantine, Lilac, Auricula, Ivy, Dahlia and Eglantine, the initials of which composed her name.

From Ireland came patterns of poplin for the Queen to wear; and she sent a pink poplin gown embroidered with silver to Princess Helen of Prussia.

Early in May Adelaide consulted the Duke of Wellington about George Cambridge's future, and it was on his advice that the Prince was sent to Hanover for military training. It was not long, however, before other young princes came to Court, and the nepotism of the Duchess of Kent caused a fresh disturbance.

Her guests on this occasion were the future Prince Consort and his brother.

The King sensed a proposed matrimonial alliance, to which he objected violently: primarily because he had not been consulted, partly because he wanted Victoria to marry George Cambridge, partly because the Princes were Coburgs and he disliked the family, but chiefly because their visit had been sponsored by the King of the Belgians, to whom he took exception because he only drank water. The grounds of his objection were certainly silly; but it was natural under the circumstances that he should resent King Leopold's interference and reasonable that the Sovereign should expect to be consulted about the matrimonial future of his successor.

To mark his annoyance, therefore, he didn't give a ball for the princes (so the Duchess of Kent had to give one herself), and in order to give his niece the opportunity of making another choice (but chiefly to annoy the Coburg family) he invited the young Duke of Brunswick and the Prince of Orange and his son to stay at Court at the same time.

The Prince of Orange had a particular aversion for King Leopold, for whom Princess Charlotte had jilted him, and to whom the rebellious Belgians had offered their vacant throne. That his hated rival was piqued at this visit was clear when he wrote to his niece: "I have not the least doubt that the King in his passion for the Oranges, will be excessively rude to your relations; this, however, will not signify much; they are *your* guests and not *his*."

King Leopold was mistaken in thinking that William IV had a passion for the Oranges (had he not forbidden Adelaide to meet them in 1834?), but he was right in supposing that he would be rude to the Coburgs. Indeed, he even went so far as to say that “the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and his sons should never set foot in England: they should not be allowed to land, and must go back whence they came.”

Owing to the conciliatory influence of the Queen, however, the Coburg visit took place and all the princes were entertained at Court harmoniously; but all her endeavours to keep the peace eventually proved unavailing, and this petty bickering culminated in a shocking episode in August.

“The King invited the Duchess of Kent to go to Windsor on the 12th August to celebrate the Queen’s birthday (13th) and to stay there over his own birthday which was to be kept on the 21st. . . . She sent word that she wanted to keep her own birthday at Claremont on the 15th (or whatever the day is), took no notice of the Queen’s birthday, but said she would go to Windsor on the 20th. This put the King in a fury.”

The day she arrived the King prorogued Parliament, and Melbourne noticed that he was in a difficult mood. He disliked the Speaker, and all the time that worthy was addressing him he observed repeatedly to Melbourne: “Shocking voice he has.” On the way to Windsor he looked in at Kensington Palace and found that the Duchess had added to her apartments a suite of seventeen rooms which he had refused to let her have when she applied for them in the previous year. Meanwhile Maria Louisa Victoria had arrived at Windsor from Claremont before the King, quite unaware that he had visited her new acquisitions at Kensington in her absence.

“Though the celebration of the King’s birthday was what was called private” (said Greville), “there were a hundred people at dinner. . . . The Duchess of Kent sat on one side of the King, and one of his sisters on the other; the Princess Victoria opposite.

“After dinner, by the Queen’s desire, His Majesty’s health, and long life to him, was given, and as soon as it was drunk he made a

very long speech, in the course of which he poured forth the following extraordinary and *foudroyante* tirade:

“I trust in God that my life may be spared for nine months longer, after which period, in the event of my death, no regency would take place. I should then have the satisfaction of leaving the royal authority to the personal exercise of that young lady ’—pointing to the Princess—’ the heiress of the Crown, and not in the hands of a person now near me, who is herself incompetent to act with propriety in the station in which she would be placed. I have no hesitation in saying that I have been insulted—grossly and continually insulted—by that person; but I am determined to endure no longer a course of behaviour so disrespectful to me. I would have her know that I am King, and I am determined to make my authority respected.’

“This awful philippic . . . was uttered with a loud voice and an excited manner. The Queen looked in deep distress; the Princess burst into tears; and the whole company were aghast.”

After which the Duchess of Kent, not unnaturally, ordered her carriage; and only with difficulty was the Queen able to persuade her to remain at the Castle until the following morning.

Soon afterwards the King made his eldest daughter, Lady de l’Isle, Housekeeper of Kensington Palace, so that she could keep an eye on the Duchess.

This shocking exhibition marred the remaining year of William’s life; and he made matters worse by refusing to apologise to his sister-in-law for the public insult. Adelaide was exceedingly unhappy and ashamed. She had tried so hard to remain friends with the Duchess and prevent the King from quarrelling with her; and although each of these visits of the Princess Victoria must have awakened the pain that lay hidden in her child-loving heart, she appeared not to know the meaning of jealousy, and was always kindness personified to both of them. Maria Louisa Victoria, however, seemed anxious only to press her advantage as mother of the future queen, and to do everything in her power not only to infuriate the King but to hurt and humiliate her sister-in-law.

At the end of August, to the great indignation of her in-laws, Lord and Lady Ailsa, the widowed Lady Augusta Kennedy

married Lord John Gordon at the Castle, and for this “there were great festivities.”

In October Lady Howe died in her thirty-seventh year, and the Queen took her eldest daughter, Lady Georgina Curzon, into her household.

The Christmas of 1836 was exceedingly cold; and the Court was snowed up at Brighton by snowdrifts ten feet high. This, however, did not explain why no Christmas present came from the Pavilion to the Princess Victoria from Uncle William, for the Queen was not prevented by the inclemency of the weather from sending her “a fine piece of Indian gold tissue.”

On February 20th they left Brighton for the last time; and it was noticed that, just as the old King’s asthma was getting worse, so was his behaviour.

At the Egham Races, “Our Gracious Sovereign . . . called out, ‘Lord Albemarle, come here, quick, quick, quick!’” So having come to his side, the King said, ‘Do tell me who that man is,’ pointing to someone in an open carriage. ‘That, sir,’ replied Albemarle, ‘is Count D’Orsay.’ ‘I had a notion it was,’ said the King, ‘but I am very blind’; and then, mustering all his energy, he said, ‘Damn him!’”

He rather embarrassed some Church dignitaries by giving them a banquet at which he informed them quite simply: “When I was a young man, I believed in nothing but pleasure and folly; nothing at all. But when I went to sea, got into a gale, and saw the wonders of the mighty deep, then I believed, and I have been a sincere Christian ever since.”

But he still refused to be reconciled with the Duchess of Kent.

Events of this kind amused the Court; but when he began insulting his Ministers publicly, it became clear that the old sailor was breaking up. One by one his links with the eighteenth century snapped. In March Mrs. Fitzherbert died; and in April he lost his eldest daughter, Lady de l’Isle, in childbirth. This distressed him greatly, especially as the Queen was away at the time, having been obliged to make a hurried journey to Meiningen to see her mother before she died. She returned immediately after to England, for she feared for her husband’s reason, as it was April.

The haste and the constant anxiety made her ill; and although she tried to conceal the fact from the King, she was unable to hold her Drawing-room on April 20th, and Princess Augusta held it for her.

This was perhaps just as well, for what occurred there would not have speeded her recovery.

The Duchess of Kent and her daughter arrived at the Palace attended by the Duchess' secretary, Sir John Conroy. That Maria Louisa Victoria was over-fond of Sir John was generally known, and was confirmed later when Queen Victoria dismissed him from her mother's Household; but Queen Adelaide, always so charitable about other people's weaknesses, and who had herself been slandered for her friendship with Lord Howe, had always overlooked her sister-in-law's infatuation. When the King saw the Duchess, he cut her ostentatiously; but when he spotted Sir John, he found himself overcome with moral indignation, and ordered the Lord Chamberlain to turn him out of the Throne Room.

Just then Lady Augusta Gordon announced that she could no longer live at Railshead next to her hostile and offended mother-in-law, who refused to approve her second marriage; and determined not to allow the Duchess of Kent to defy him any more, the King gave Lady Augusta her sister's vacated appointment as Housekeeper at Kensington Palace.

In the spring of 1837 Munster again quarrelled with his father. Mrs. Fitzherbert and his father-in-law, Lord Egremont, succeeded in reconciling them, and a letter from the latter to Maria written anent this episode remains:

“I am much obliged to you for the correspondence, which I return, and will not appear to know anything about it, until Lord Munster mentions it to me himself. I should have recommended one visit in preference to a hundred of these Protocols, which are more like the Manifestos of two Sovereigns on the eve of a War than a reconciliation between a father and his son.”

On May 17th, against the Queen's wishes, the King drove to St. James's to hold a *levée*, and returned to Windsor so weak that

he couldn't walk upstairs. Next day, however, he insisted on again going to London to hold a Drawing-room. It was noticed that he looked very ill; but he refused to behave like an invalid, and on the day following he gave a dinner on the anniversary of La Hogue, at which he surprised his guests by delivering a lecture on the battle.

On the 20th he nearly fainted at luncheon, and collapsed in the corridor after dinner. Only the Queen was able to dissuade him from attending the re-opening of the Chapel Royal, St. James's, on the day following; and although she sent for Sir Henry Halford, he had to be kept hidden in the Castle, for William refused to see a doctor. She also sent for her own physician-in-ordinary, Dr. Chambers, in whom she had great faith.

On May 22nd the King held audiences as usual; but in the evening he was at last persuaded to see Dr. Chambers, who, he was told, had really come to see the Queen.

Sir Henry Halford was greatly offended when he found that the King had already seen Chambers. The most successful physician of his time, Sir Henry had always stood in high favour at Court and had attended most of George III's family on their deathbeds. George IV had expressed a dying wish that his successor should appoint him physician-in-ordinary; and early in the new reign he was duly gazetted first physician to both William IV and his Queen. But Adelaide, who thought Sir Henry's fame rested less on his skill than on his obsequious bedside manner, had little faith in his abilities, and it is significant that it was Chambers, the rising young doctor, who saw the King first.

On the 24th Princess Victoria came of age. The King gave a ball for her at St. James's, and “though much better was unable to be there and the Queen neither, so Princess Augusta made the *bonneurs*.” It must have been a bitter disappointment to William not to be able to attend this party, for it had always been his constant hope and prayer that he would live to see his niece's majority, so that the Duchess of Kent should not be Regent. For a birthday present he gave her a grand piano and sent Lord Conyngham to offer her an establishment independent of her mother. To the Duchess' chagrin the Princess accepted his offer gleefully—but it

was never destined to materialise. The sands were rapidly running out and the reign was nearly at an end.

William still refused to go to bed; and on the 27th he held a Council to which, to his great indignation, he was wheeled in a chair. Two days later he was with great difficulty dissuaded from attending another Drawing-room at St. James's; and on June 2nd Greville noted "The King has been desperately ill, his pulse down at thirty." Notwithstanding, he refused to allow the large house-party, which had been invited for Eton Montem and Ascot, to be put off, and on June 4th the guests arrived.

Three days later the Queen asked them to go home, as she wished to take the King to Brighton, which he loved. But he was too ill to be moved; and although at his desire the Queen went to Ascot alone, so as not to disappoint the race-goers, she was intensely worried about him, and suggested he should see the Archbishop on Sunday, the 11th. The King said that Mr. Wood, formerly George Cambridge's tutor and now the Queen's Chaplain, would do just as well, and sent for him to read Morning Prayer. He found this so comforting that during the rest of his illness he made Augustus Fitzclarence read Matins to him daily.

By June 12th it was known for the first time that he was alarmingly ill; but although he was only kept alive with raw meat and curaçoa, he refused to allow any bulletins to be issued, saying that "as long as he was able to transact public business, he would not have the public alarmed on his account." During the week he received the Hanoverian Minister and the Duke of Cumberland, who would soon become King of Hanover. The end was so near now that former animosities seemed to fade away. On the 16th he observed to the Queen: "I have had some quiet sleep; come and pray with me, and thank the Almighty for it."

On the following Sunday he remarked, "This is the 18th of June. I should like to live to see the sun of Waterloo set," and when Lord Munster, knowing with what enthusiasm his father had always celebrated Waterloo Day, brought him the flag which his old friend the Iron Duke sent annually, the old King grasped a fold and said, "Ah! that was a glorious day for England." Later in the day, together with the Queen and his daughter, Lady

Mary Fox, he received the Sacrament from the Archbishop “with attention and great apparent comfort”; and his last Royal act was to pardon a condemned man.

But he still refused adamantly to go to bed; and on the next day he sat in his chair, the Queen kneeling by his side and turning over the pages of his huge prayer-book, while the Archbishop read the Visitation of the Sick. He held her other hand tightly the whole while, and when, overcome with exhaustion, she began to cry, he remarked characteristically, “Bear up, bear up.” He then saw all his children, and at the Queen’s suggestion sent a kind message to Princess Victoria. She was not invited to take leave of him, probably because it was certain that her mother would insist upon coming with her, and her presence would not have been at all welcome to the dying King.

Very early on the morning of June 20th Queen Adelaide sent the Archbishop and Lord Conyngham on their historic mission to Kensington Palace, where, the faint rays of dawn streaming through the half-opened shutters into the still undusted drawing-room, they knelt to kiss the hand of their Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria.

“He was odd, very odd and singular,” wrote the new Queen in her journal with eighteen-year-old sophistication; “but his intentions were often ill-interpreted”—and indeed William IV has never been sufficiently appreciated.

His short reign saw two of the great milestones on the road to British democracy: the Reform Bill and the Abolition of Slavery; and there was other important legislation, too, such as the new Poor Law, the Municipal Corporations Act, the payment of tithe in cash and not in kind, and the compulsory registration of baptisms, marriages and funerals.

Within three months of his accession the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was opened; and in December 1836 the London & Greenwich Railroad, the first to come to the capital, was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor. In June 1835, before the completion of this line, the *Royal William*, the new locomotive intended for use on it, underwent its trials to the great admiration

of the Kentishmen. His Majesty, who weighed 5 tons, and was 15 feet long with a 6-foot 6-inch chimney, puffed along the track with such *éclat* that in October he was provided with a consort, the *Royal Adelaide*; and these were the first two locomotives to steam into the metropolis.

Another *Royal William* was the Canadian-built steamboat which succeeded in crossing the Atlantic under steam in nineteen days in August 1833, the first British ship to do so. *His* consort, however, never aspired to emulate him. Built in England, she was content to paddle between the Thames and the Orwell prior to the advent of the Eastern Counties Railroad.

The King, whose advocacy of steam for the Navy had been met with ridicule, took a great pride in the achievements of his puffing and paddling namesakes.

The London Fire Brigade dates from the period of his reign; and he it was, during the Reform riots, who first suggested the enrolment of special constables, as a better way of maintaining order than the established custom of calling out the militia. In 1833, when the first Thames tunnel collapsed architecturally and financially, he sent for Brunel to show him the plans. This mark of Royal favour enabled Brunel to secure the necessary capital to continue the work, which was completed in 1843.

When William IV first moved into Windsor Castle he startled his friends by his proposals to build and rebuild there on his brother's scale; but when he realised that popular feeling considered the recent building operations of the Royal family sufficient for several generations, he relinquished the idea and contented himself with the Waterloo Chamber and Adelaide Cottage at the Castle and King William's Temple at Kew. It was, however, his idea to clear away the Royal Mews from the site of what is now Trafalgar Square for the erection of the Nelson Column.

The many public buildings in provincial towns—atheneums, assembly rooms, corn exchanges and the like—ornamented with sphinxes, lotus flowers and other pseudo-Egyptian embellishments, invariably date from his reign; and it is remarkable how many charitable and philanthropic institutions were founded

under his patronage. Keble preached his historic Assize sermon, which inaugurated the Oxford Movement, in 1833.

The Court of St. James's was the first democratic court in Europe, and William IV the first sovereign to attempt to live the private life of an ordinary citizen. In keeping open house and walking about his capital unescorted, Louis Philippe merely copied him. Ever since the death of Charles I the English Court had been either improper and corrupt or exceedingly dull, narrow and exclusive.

It is customary to contrast the purity and decorum of the court of Queen Victoria with the rakish licentiousness of the preceding reigns; but the young queen did not make so sudden a break with tradition as is commonly supposed; for Court life as we know it to-day began under Queen Adelaide. She it was who first ejected the courtesans, the gamblers, the drunkards and the foul-mouthed; and although her husband's past and present behaviour necessitated a very liberal interpretation of her standards in such matters, she set an example of decent living and public service which her niece adopted enthusiastically but did not herself inaugurate.

The reign was marked by considerable colonial development. The city of Adelaide was named after the Queen in 1832; and so were several less familiar places in the southern hemisphere. The Antarctic boasts an Adelaide Island; and off the coast of Chile are a group called Reina Adelaida. Numbers of places were named after the King, and this was only just, for until the accession of Edward VII, William IV was the most travelled English sovereign. He was the first member of the British Royal family to visit the U.S.A. and the first king who had been outside Europe. He had lived in Canada and the West Indies and had travelled considerably on the Continent. He had once sailed completely round the coast of the United Kingdom, landing at every port of importance and even visiting the more remote Scottish isles; and he must have seen and been seen by more of his future subjects than any of his predecessors.

The intimate and equal terms on which he stood before his accession with numbers of middle-class and working-class people

and an understanding of them acquired before there was the slightest likelihood of his ever becoming their king stood him in good stead when he came to the throne. Had not Midshipman William Henry Guelph begun his Naval career by having a fight with a certain Lieutenant Moodie?

Having gone to sea at fifteen he lost the German accent common to the rest of his family, and acquired in the Royal Navy a genuine love of England and a distrust of all foreigners.

From time to time his actions betrayed his lack of a general education; but his subjects, who always prefer a sailor to a scholar, liked his dogged obstinancy and were not in the least disturbed at his knowing nothing about art and music and the like. His kindness to his friends, his brusque consideration for his servants and his devotion to duty endeared him to the large majority of his people (the very smart and the very clever excepted); and when he died many simple folk said in their hearts what they had once shouted at him in the streets: “Well done, old boy!”

Chapter 14 : *THE PERFECT QUEEN DOWAGER,*
1837-1839

FOR some time after the King's death Adelaide remained on her knees by his bedside; she then went to her room and slept for some hours. But she was up again soon after eight to receive Lord Conyngham on his return from Kensington. He brought a letter from Victoria addressed to "The Queen of England." When it was pointed out to the writer (probably by her mother!) that she herself was now the Queen, she replied that she would not be the first to address Queen Adelaide differently.

In reply to the widow's request to be allowed to remain at the Castle until after the funeral, Lord Conyngham brought a message from Kensington that she was to stay there as long as she liked.

Adelaide now had her reward for her consistent kindness to the lonely little Princess. The new Queen was very fond of the gentle aunt who remembered to send her love to the Big Doll and who gave such jolly well-arranged parties for children; in some ways she allowed her to take the place rightly belonging to her less understanding and hypocritical mother.

Later in the day the Queen Dowager wrote to Victoria:

"My dearest Niece . . .

"I feel most grateful for your kind letter full of sympathy with my irreparable loss, and thank you with all my heart for your feeling expression on this melancholy occasion. I am, as you may suppose, deeply affected by all the sad scenes I have gone through lately; but I have the great comfort to dwell upon the recollection of the perfect resignation, piety and patience with which the dear King bore his trials and sufferings, and the truly Christian-like manner of his death.

"Excuse my writing more at present, my heart is overwhelmed and head aches very much. Accept the assurance of my most affectionate devotion and allow me to consider myself always as your Majesty's most affectionate Friend, Aunt and Subject

"Adelaide."

This letter, typical of her perfect attitude towards the eighteen-year-old Queen, making no difficulties, showing no jealousy or bitterness and wisely offering no good advice, reveals the sweetness of Adelaide's nature and her sound good sense.

It was not surprising that her head ached. She was utterly worn out for want of sleep.

"For three weeks prior to his dissolution" (said Archbishop Howley) "the Queen sat by his bedside, performing for him every office which a sick man could require and depriving herself of all manner of rest and reflection. She underwent labours which I thought no ordinary woman could endure. No language can do justice to her meekness and calmness."

The Landgravine thought the same:

"... His dear, valuable perfect widowed Queen. She is the first to be thought of; how much she deserves from us all; never did she leave him night and day. To the last she supported him, and he died in her arms. It is impossible to be too strong in her praise, so well has she conducted herself; soothed him, calmed him, softened the pain and anguish he experienced, by her amiable and sweet manner towards him, and for twelve days literally never took off her clothes."

The Duke of Buckingham recorded that the King died with his head on her shoulder.

Adelaide was the first Queen Dowager for over a century; the last one, Catharine of Braganza, the widow of Charles II, had returned to Portugal early in the next reign, and the last but one, Catharine Parr, Henry VIII's sixth wife, had remarried Admiral Seymour and retired from public life almost immediately. There was consequently no precedent to follow, and Adelaide found herself in a position which no queen since the Middle Ages had filled before her. Even those of her subjects who had criticised her as queen were forced to admit that she played her new and difficult rôle to perfection.

On June 22nd she wrote again to Queen Victoria:

"My dearest Niece,"

"I am most grateful for your amiable letter and truly kind offer to come and see me next week. Any day convenient to your Majesty will be agreeable to me, the sooner the better, for I am equally anxious to see you. . . .

"My prayers are with you and my blessing follows you in all you have to go through. My health is as well as it can be after the great anxieties I have suffered, and I try to keep up under my heavy trial and deep affliction.

"My best wishes attend you, my dearest Niece, and I am for ever your Majesty's most affectionate and faithful Friend, Aunt and Subject.

"Adelaide."

Mme. de Lieven was undoubtedly right in saying that Queen Adelaide was far cleverer than was generally admitted: as William's wife and Victoria's aunt, her greatest cleverness consisted in her ability to conceal the fact.

Two days later the younger Queen wrote in her journal:

"We arrived at the Castle, which looked very mournful and melancholy with the flag half mast high. . . . We went instantly to the poor Queen's apartments. She received me most kindly, but was at first much affected. She soon, however, regained her self-possession and was wonderfully calm and composed. . . . The Queen is really a most estimable and excellent person and she bears the prospect of the great change she must soon go through in leaving Windsor and changing her position in a most admirable, strong and high-minded manner. I do not think her looking ill and the widow's cap and weeds rather become her."

She remained at the castle while the King lay in state in the Waterloo Chamber, which he himself had built in memory of his beloved battle.

The funeral took place on July 8th at St. George's Chapel at nine at night; and the arrangements appear to have been inefficient. Greville "saw two men in an animated conversation and one laughing heartily at the very foot of the coffin as it was lying in state." (This would not have disturbed the jovial old King in the least. He had always believed in being cheerful at funerals.)

"The service was intolerably long and tedious, and miserably read by the Dean."

Contrary to such precedent as there was, Queen Adelaide was present. Slipping into the Royal Closet so quietly that few people realised that she was there, she saw the Crowns of England and Hanover placed for the last time side by side on the coffin of a British king.

Victoria had invited her to take anything she cared for from the castle; but Adelaide characteristically selected only the silver cup in which she had given William his curaçoa during his illness and a family portrait by Hayter of the Fitzclarence family grouped around a bust of their Royal father with Mrs. Jordan's portrait in the background. Whether she really wanted portraits of her disagreeable step-family or whether she did not wish that particular souvenir of King William to remain at Windsor, nobody ever knew.

On her last evening at the castle she wrote to the Queen:

"My dearest Niece,

"I must, before I leave this dear Castle, once more express to you the grateful sense I entertain for the kind treatment I have experienced from you since it has pleased our Heavenly Father to put you in possession of it. You have contributed much to my comfort under all the painful and distressing circumstances of this time of woe, and I assure you that I ever shall remember it with sincere gratitude. . . .

"My best wishes and prayers attend you on all occasions, for I shall be for the rest of my life devoted and attached to you as your most affectionate Aunt and Subject.

"Adelaide."

Then she left Windsor for Bushey, accompanied by her brother and Prince George of Cambridge, and carrying with her the silver cup and family portrait—so different from Lady Conyngham's well-stocked removal at the end of the previous reign. She hated leaving Windsor, which she loved for its beauty rather than its grandeur, and where the townspeople had always loved *her*; but she was glad to go to Bushey, for trying as the King had been to nurse, he had been still more trying to live with, and she was tired out.

Here the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar and three of her children joined her and remained with her for the rest of the summer. She received no one at all, since she could not see some people and refuse to see others; and when public bodies were determined to read her addresses of condolence, she made Howe deal with them.

"Her mind," wrote Lady Gore "(is) so peaceful, always occupied, much interested with her sister and her children, constantly doing charitable acts, and for ever talking of the King, and hoping she had thoroughly done her duty."

During the summer John Wood, her chaplain, prepared an account of the last days of William IV, which Queen Adelaide had privately printed for her friends. She sent a copy to the Bishop of Worcester, who caused her much distress by obtusely sending it to the newspapers.

Although she was "less cordial and less confidential to Sir Henry (Halford) than other members of the Royal Family," she presented him shortly after the King's death with a large silver vase inscribed: "To Sir Henry Halford Bart. G.C.H. A grateful acknowledgement of his attendance upon his late Majesty King William IV during his last illness. A.R." This carefully worded inscription certainly records no enthusiastic appreciation of the recipient's skill!

The next two months saw a Royal general post.

In July Queen Victoria moved into Buckingham Palace, where the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar paid her a visit. In August the Court moved to Windsor, where Victoria chose Queen Adelaide's apartments, "though not in the same way as she did."

Princess Augusta was given Clarence House, which was now no longer required for the Sovereign, and Princess Sophia moved to Kensington.

Cumberland had already left for Hanover, over which no woman could rule, and inaugurated his reign by abolishing trial by jury and the constitution given by William IV. He gave the Hanoverians another, less liberal constitution instead; and, being Germans, they swallowed it and Ernest Augustus too.

He then demanded the jewels which had been bequeathed rather ambiguously by Queen Charlotte to the "Royal Family of Hanover." It is strange that the old Queen should not have visualised the possibility of a girl succeeding to the English Throne: probably she did not know that Hanover enjoyed the questionable benefit of the Salic Law; but in any case it was clearly not her intention that her lovely diamonds should decorate the person of the new Queen of Hanover, of whom she so thoroughly disapproved.

The accession of King Ernest necessitated the return to England of the Duke of Cambridge, who, on behalf of three British sovereigns, had governed the lilliputian kingdom so wisely and well. He moved with his family to Cambridge House, Piccadilly, and Cambridge Cottage at Kew; and this exchange of princes was welcomed by the English, who liked the Cambridges and still credited the Duke of Cumberland with sinister designs on the life of his niece.

The Duchess of Saxe-Weimar left Bushey at the end of September and visited Windsor before sailing. Queen Victoria recorded in her journal that

"at $\frac{1}{2}$ to 12 came the Queen with her sister the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar and stayed with me till 1 o'clock. The poor Queen was very much composed, though it must have been a very painful and severe trial for her, considering she had not been here since she left the Castle the night after the poor King's funeral. I showed her all my rooms with which she was much pleased; and she went by herself to see the room where the King died. I sang a little and Mamma also, while they were there. . . ."

Adelaide undoubtedly missed the King greatly. Like a child, he had always needed much affectionate and discreet handling; and the constant strain had robbed her of her health. She now had, for the first time, the chance to live her own life in her own way. Political considerations no longer interfered with her choice of attendants and her Household consisted henceforward of her real friends and well-wishers. She was now a rich woman, and derived the greatest satisfaction from giving away the major part

of her fortune; it is estimated that during her widowhood she gave £20,000 yearly to charity. She gave generously to the new cathedral at Adelaide, Australia; and one of the first acts of her widowhood was her foundation of the King William Naval Asylum at Penge for twelve naval officers' widows.

Her name was found in a begging-letter-writer's list of people most likely to be touched for a fiver.

Although her cough continued to trouble her considerably, she now had few worries or anxieties, and was able to rest at last. No longer obliged to entertain lavishly, she could live quietly, though never in seclusion, never bored, enjoying her simple pleasures of music, painting and needlework, receiving the visits of old friends regardless of their position or politics, and devoting herself unostentatiously to good works.

She was still only forty-four.

Accompanied by Princess Augusta she spent the first winter of her widowhood at St. Leonards. The Princess was seventy, but she was cheerful and active and modern in her outlook and had always been one of Adelaide's closest friends. Attended by Howe and Denbigh, Lady Charles Somerset, Miss Boyle and the Reverend John Wood, they arrived in mid-October, and at the Queen Dowager's special request there was no reception. They passed their time walking and dining in the neighbourhood, putting to sea in a "pleasure barge" sent round from Chatham for the purpose, and attending Divine Service. Oddly enough, the foundation stone of St. Leonard's Church had been laid by Princess Sophia-Matilda of Gloucester on Adelaide's coronation day. One day the Duke of Wellington drove over from Walmer to dine with them and talk over old times. While she was at St. Leonards she endeared herself to the inhabitants by giving coal and blankets to the poor and subscribing generously to local good causes.

The doctors had hoped that the bracing air would cure her cough; but she was not at all well in Sussex (Brighton had never suited her either), and she was said to be suffering from cancer. Contributing to her ill-health was probably the fact that she had something on her mind. . . .

Immediately after the accession of Queen Victoria, Greville noted:

“She has been extremely kind and civil to the Queen Dowager, but she has taken no notice of the King’s children, good, bad or indifferent. Lord Munster asked for an audience to deliver up the Keys of the Castle which he had, and was very graciously received by her, but she did not give him back the keys. Adolphus Fitzclarence has lost his Lordship of the Bedchamber, but then only Peers are retained, and he keeps the command of the Royal Yacht. He has had no intimation whether his pension and his Rangership of Windsor Park are to be continued to him.”

The new Queen was evidently feeling her way; and when she demurred about taking over Queen Adelaide’s band, it boded ill for the Fitzclarences.

The cost of their upkeep was a considerable charge on the Privy Purse, and it was hardly to be expected that Victoria should feel inclined to continue their pensions, even should she allow them to retain their various offices. Indeed, in view of the moral scruples of the Duchess of Kent, it appeared extremely unlikely that they would get either.

The strange behaviour of the Reverend Lord Augustus gave few grounds for hope. When travelling by train with a friend, determined to oust an old lady from his compartment, he pretended to be a lunatic escorted by his keeper. But despite the weird noises and terpsichorean exhibition produced by her fellow-traveller, the old lady remained unperturbed till she got out at her destination. Then, turning to the lunatic, she said calmly:

“Lord Augustus FitzClarence, you thought to alarm me in a most unmanly, ungentlemanlike way, and get rid of my presence; but I know you and your silly ways. . . . You have only shown yourself a most unworthy son of the most clever and delightful comic actress—whom I knew and respected.”

Queen Adelaide was probably prepared to continue their allowances out of her own income if need be, which would not have disturbed her much, so simply did she live. What troubled her, however, was the slur cast on the King’s memory should his

children be ejected from the sinecures and positions he had given them—and she alone knew how William had pinched and scraped in order to make provision for them.

He had left them each £2,000 and equal shares in a life insurance policy of £40,000 which he had first taken out when Duke of Clarence; it had also been his custom to divide his annual savings among them. But after living rent free at Court and at Bushey all their lives, this did not seem a great deal to them.

After the way they had treated their stepmother, it is remarkable that she troubled her head about them at all, but she worried about their future all the winter.

In January she received good news, and wrote gratefully to her niece:

“ My dearest Niece,

“ Having just been informed of your gracious consideration of, and your generosity towards, the dear King’s children, I must express to you how deeply I feel the kind proof of your attachment to the late King, whose memory you respect by the generous continuance of their former allowances from the Privy Purse. Nothing could have given me more satisfaction, and I trust and hope that they will prove their gratitude and entire devotion to you by their future conduct. Let me thank you, dearest Victoria, from the bottom of my heart, and be assured that the heavenly blessing of our beloved King will be upon you for your kindness to those he loved so much in this world. . . .”

And time showed that Uncle William’s heavenly blessing undoubtedly rested on his dearest niece.

Marlborough House had been Crown property since 1817, when it had been purchased for the Princess Charlotte; Prince Leopold had lived there for short periods before his accession to the Belgian Throne, but it had never been completely furnished; and although 300 workmen had begun work there in October 1837 to prepare it for the Queen Dowager, it was, as is usual on similar occasions, not ready in time for her return from St. Leonards. When she went back to London in March she consequently moved into

Clarence House, her former home, until the workmen should vacate her new abode.

Utterly devoid of jealousy, the Queen Dowager would have liked to be present at the Coronation; but custom forbade the appearance of any rival crowned head, and as Uncle Leopold and Uncle Ernest had both been warned off by the Government, she remained quietly with her pink-and-grey cockatoo at Marlborough House. She decorated it with evergreens, however, and during the Service she wrote a letter to the Queen:

" 28th June, 1838

" 11.45 on Coronation Day

" My dearest Niece,

" The guns are just announcing your approach to the Abbey, and as I am not near you, and cannot take part in the sacred ceremony of your Coronation, I must address you in writing to assure you that my thoughts and my whole heart are with you, and my prayers are offered up to heaven for your happiness, and the prosperity and glory of your reign. . . ."

No one knew better than she the bitter weight of the Crown; and if ever a prayer was granted, it was that offered by Queen Adelaide on Victoria's coronation day.

It was noticed with interest that Adelaide did not retain the services of Sir Henry Halford, whose place was taken by Dr. Chambers, though Sir David Davis remained her domestic physician until her death.

Neither doctor was satisfied with the state of her health; and in June Queen Victoria noted in her diary:

" The Queen Dowager told me that Chambers . . . had told her that she must not pass another winter in England, and wished her to go to Madeira, which she declared was too far off; he then named Malta, to which she assented, asked my leave to go, and to have a frigate to go in."

Her real reason for declining to go to Madeira was " so as to avoid spending her income out of the British Dominions."

As soon as the arrangements for her journey were completed she

embarked in October at Portsmouth on board H.M.S. *Hastings*, escorted by two steamers. She had a tremendous send-off, and it was remarked that she was "plainly dressed, and although thin, looking well." She took with her Lord and Lady Sheffield, Miss Hudson and Miss Hope Johnson, and they stayed at the Palace of St. Antonia at Valetta for several months.

While in Malta she found another outlet for her generosity, and so concerned was she about it, that in December she wrote to the Queen:

"The English mail going to-day gives me another opportunity to address you, and to name a subject to you which I think deserves your consideration, and about which I feel most anxious.

"It is the want of a Protestant church in this place which I mean. There are so many English residents here, it is the seat of an English Government, and there is *not one* Church belonging to the Church of England. . . .

"I address myself to you, as the head of the Church of England, and entreat you to consider well this important subject, and to talk it over with your ministers and the Archbishop, in order to devise the best means of remedying a want so discreditable to our country. Should there be no funds at your disposal to effect this object, most happy shall I feel to contribute to any subscription which may be set on foot, and I believe that a considerable sum may be raised amongst the Protestants of the Island, where all parties are most anxious to see a proper place of divine worship erected. . . ."

But the Queen and her Ministers had other things to think about, and eventually Queen Adelaide herself built St. Paul's Cathedral, Valetta, at a cost of £10,000 and laid the foundation stone on March 20th, 1839. For many years it was known as "Queen Adelaide's Church"—by no means an unworthy dedication.

"The Queen Dowager's letters do tantalise one a good deal, I must own," wrote Victoria to the King of the Belgians on New Year's Day. She had just received a delightful description of the orange-trees in the palace gardens at Valetta, while the Court was trying to keep warm at Brighton.

In the spring Queen Victoria's tremendous popularity began to wane, largely owing to lack of wisdom on the part of her entourage.

She acted rashly upon the assumption that Lady Flora Hastings, the Duchess of Kent's lady-in-waiting, was *enceinte*—when she wasn't; and although Victoria's own ladies were entirely to blame for making the false accusation, it was the Queen who was hissed at Ascot.

This unhappy incident led indirectly to the "Bedchamber Plot" in May. The Queen's ladies, who, owing to their officious zeal with regard to Lady Flora, had made themselves very unpopular, were all Whigs; and when Sir Robert Peel was invited to form a Tory Ministry in succession to Lord Melbourne, he made it a condition of taking office that at least some of them should be replaced by Tory ladies. The Queen refused to part with any of them, on the ground that their appointments were not political, and Sir Robert declined to serve. Then Melbourne, though defeated in Parliament, was recalled; and tongues began to wag once more. The new Prime Minister was accused of making political capital out of his personal influence over the Queen: it was even whispered that she might marry him.

This disturbed Uncle Leopold, who had other matrimonial plans for his niece. Having lost his own chance of becoming King-Consort of Britain and being anxious to retain the office in the Coburg family, he saw in marriage with Victoria an ideal career for his nephew Albert; and feeling that in view of Melbourne's ascendancy it was high time the Queen should have a husband and advisor of his own choosing, he arranged for the Prince to pay a second visit to England after the Coronation.

Meanwhile the Sovereign's unpopularity became so marked that it became the practice "to contrast her invidiously with . . . the Queen Dowager; and at public dinners to receive the Queen's health with solemn silence, while the succeeding toast of the Queen Dowager was the signal for long-continued cheers."

Remembering what she herself had suffered during the Reform agitation, Adelaide must have smiled when this was reported to her; but, being the last woman in the world to think to take

advantage of such a situation, she considerably remained abroad until people had forgotten their anger with their Sovereign.

On the way home from Malta she visited Germany; but she did not linger there. Her mother was dead, the Queen of Würtemberg also; and she knew the Cumberlands would not welcome her in Hanover.

She reached England just in time for the next painful episode. A minx calling herself Sophia Guelph Sims declared herself to be the daughter of George IV and Maria Fitzherbert; and although it was subsequently proved that she was nothing of the sort, and that even if she were, it was of no dynastic significance, the incident did nothing to fortify the position of the Queen.

Chapter 15 : “*PER PASSAGE PÊNIBLE À PORT
PLAISANT,*” 1839-1844

SCRATCHED ON THE WALL OF A CELL
IN THE TOWER OF LONDON

AT the end of July Queen Adelaide went to dine with Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace, taking with her Maria da Gloria's step-mother, the Empress of Brazil.

“The Queen Dowager was quite shocked at the idea of going in before me, but I insisted on it” (wrote Victoria). “It must have been . . . a severe trial . . . seeing all the same servants and the same plate, but she behaved perfectly.”

In September she lunched with the Queen at Windsor, and in October passed two nights there. “It is the *first time*, and will be a severe trial,” wrote Victoria to Uncle Leopold; but she did her utmost to please her aunt by generously turning out of her own room, which had been Queen Adelaide's, and forbidding anyone to tell her guest. The visit was not so painful as Victoria anticipated, and she invited the Queen Dowager again on December 10th.

Between these two visits Adelaide had received a letter from her niece:

My dear Aunt,

“Your constant kindness and the affection you have ever shown me makes me certain that you will take much interest in an event which so nearly concerns the future happiness of my life; I cannot, therefore, any longer delay to inform you of my intended marriage with my Cousin Albert. . . . It was both my duty and my inclination to tell you of this as soon as it was determined upon; but, as it is not to be yet publicly announced, I beg you not to mention it except to our own Family. I thank you much for your kind letter, and rejoice to hear you have enjoyed yourself so much.

“Believe me, always, your very affectionate Niece

“Victoria R.”

This letter was wrongly addressed and was sent to Lord Howe by mistake. But Adelaide was not easily offended and wrote congratulating both of them. Curiously enough, Albert's reply also went astray.

“Imagine what I have done!” (wrote the Prince to his intended). “I wrote to all your relations, including even Uncle Ernest of Hanover, and when I was putting my papers in order at Coburg, I found my letter to Queen Adelaide had been forgotten! I was and still am beside myself, since only yesterday I received a very friendly and gracious letter from the Queen. . . . I enclose a letter for your aunt and beg you to make my excuses to her for having been guilty of such stupidity, so that she may not think a letter was not sent to her on purpose.”

After this second mishap, the Queen Dowager might reasonably have thought the slight intentional, but as usual she was understanding and forgiving; and after a round of visits to the country houses of her friends, including Nuneham Paddocks, Gopsall, Warwick Castle, Drayton and Belvoir, she spent the winter in London in order to be present at the wedding in February.

Knowing how King William had always tried to prevent this engagement, she was at first a little biased against it—indeed, she would have preferred to see Victoria betrothed to Prince George of Cambridge. But after meeting the handsome young bridegroom and realising that it had been given to her niece to marry for love, her heart, which had never known romance, warmed towards the Prince, and she became one of his most devoted admirers. Interested as they both were in dutiful living and good works, they had much in common; and Albert, who had been to all intents and purposes motherless himself, and who had no very high opinion of the Duchess of Kent, encouraged the Queen in her affection for her wise and tactful predecessor.

In January he wrote to his bride:

“The Duke of Meiningen has addressed through me an earnest request to you. He says that the state of his sister's (Queen Adelaide) health is not free from danger, and that shortly after going to church she had another hæmorrhage. He fears that the long marriage service in the cold Chapel Royal would be

prejudicial to her, and yet he is sure she could not be restrained from being present at the ceremony, for fear of reviving the silly clamour of the newspapers and of making public the attitude she adopted towards the event, unless you can induce her to stay away. I feel sure you will gladly do what you can to get her not to go to the Chapel. . . ."

But Adelaide refused to stay away; and Sir George Hayter's wedding picture shows her smiling happily as she stands between the Duchess of Cambridge and the best man. Although the picture can hardly be said to flatter her, it compares very favourably with that of her sisters-in-law, who appear remarkably bulky and middle-aged, and rather cross. Adelaide retained her graceful *petite* figure and sweet smile throughout her life.

She discarded her widow's weeds for the occasion, and was dressed, according to Lady Landsdowne, "in such perfect taste, no tinsel and diamonds, but velvet and ermine." Hayter's picture also records that her dress was cream-coloured and that she wore her fine pearls. Lady Ilchester wrote: "I do like the Dowager Queen being at the altar, and also that upon the close of the service the Queen should have darted up to her to give her a kiss."

After the departure of the bridal couple for Windsor, Queen Adelaide gave a large family party at Marlborough House, at which the Duchess of Cambridge, who felt that her own son had been slighted, very pointedly remained seated when the health of the bridegroom was given.

Prince George himself, however, far from being aggrieved, was thankful to have escaped, for within a few months he married a beautiful actress, Louisa Farebrother. Victoria was piqued and refused to give the Royal Assent to the marriage; but Adelaide, who was more tolerant, retained Prince George's affection despite his *mésalliance*.

Strangely enough, in the very same year, Lady Cecilia Buggin (who upon her marriage to Sussex had taken her mother's maiden name of Underwood) was created Duchess of Inverness. Although there were still many people, including the Duke of Wellington, who did not believe this wedding had ever really taken place, the Queen was satisfied that it had, and "Ciss," as

Creevey nicknamed her, had behaved with perfect decorum in a somewhat delicate situation. Queen Adelaide, who had not felt called upon to wait for the regularisation of Lady Cecilia's position in order to be friendly with her, was genuinely delighted at the Royal recognition of the *status quo*.

She spent much of her time with Princess Augusta; and in April they went to the opera together. The Princess was now 73—old enough to be the Queen Dowager's mother—and the younger lady hesitated to go far from Marlborough House lest the Royal spinster should need her. She nevertheless managed to fit in a tour of the Lake District; and stayed at Belton, Harewood, Alton Towers and Matlock en route.

In August she paid a short visit to an old friend, the Archbishop of York, at Nuneham, near Oxford, and there she celebrated her forty-eighth birthday.

“Owing to the absence of Her Majesty at Nuneham” (said her former adversary, *The Times*), “there were no festivities at Marlborough House, but during the day nearly all the members of the nobility and gentry remaining in Town called and left cards of congratulation. At Hampton Court, Hampton and the other villages adjacent to Bushey Park, the day was kept almost as a general holiday, while in the evening many of the houses were illuminated, and discharges of fireworks took place. In the metropolis Her Majesty's tradespeople also illuminated their houses.”

Though the nobility and gentry were rather belated in demonstrating their loyalty to their former Queen, the villagers at Bushey had always loved their gentle and generous *châtelaine*, and the London tradesmen regarded with awe one of the few members of the Royal family who had always paid her bills.

In September she decided to forgo her customary autumn holiday and remained in London to help nurse Princess Augusta, who was failing fast; and when the old lady died at Clarence House in the presence of all her relations, it was Queen Adelaide who held her hand and closed her eyes. Ever since that first alarming introduction at Kew, Augusta had been her staunch friend and defender, and at the time of her greatest unpopularity

had not hesitated to describe her as "our most loveable and perfect Queen."

Earlier in the same year she had lost another admirer in the Landgravine; and when the Queen of Hanover died a few months later, another link with the past was broken.

Gradually the scene was changing. Gabriel von Bulow was no longer in England, as her husband had been recalled to Prussia. Of William's sisters, only the Duchess of Gloucester and poor blind Princess Sophia were left; and although the Duchess of Kent now occupied Clarence House and Frogmore, things could never be quite the same as they had been before the King's terrible outburst.

With the exception of the Duchess of Cambridge and Lord Howe, all Adelaide's relations and intimate friends were considerably older than herself. This was due to the circumstances of her marriage. Her husband had been twenty-eight years her senior and his friends belonged to his own generation. She had been given no opportunity to make friends of her own, for William's cronies took up all her time. Becoming at twenty-five the step-mother of nine grown-up children, a step-grandmother at twenty-six, and a Queen Dowager at forty-four, she seemed much older than she really was; and now that William's contemporaries were reluctantly taking their departure in quick succession, she began to feel a little lonely.

But a new generation was arriving to take their places; and when in November 1840 the Princess Royal was born, and named Victoria Adelaide after her Queen-godmother, there was great rejoicing in England, for the people saw in the healthy, determined infant a bulwark against the wicked old King of Hanover and his blind son.

Another goddaughter, Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, delighted the lonely queen with her visits. Adelaide once sent her a very elaborate feather bonnet, which she had bought for her own use but would now never wear. The Duchess of Cambridge thought it unsuitable for a child and Princess Mary took a violent dislike to it, but for courtesy's sake the tearful little girl was compelled to wear it on a visit to Queen Adelaide, who had no idea of the unhappiness caused by her kindly meant present.



EARL HOWE, 1838

From an engraving after the painting by Ward

Christmas 1840 saw her at Sudbury Hall, a fine Jacobean house near Derby, which she had rented from Lord Vernon; and it was noticed by the villagers “that Her Majesty while attending public worship was troubled by a frequent cough.”

She returned to Town in February, and drove in state to the christening of the Princess Royal at Buckingham Palace.

In May the Duchesse de Dino met the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar in Germany and was told “that the Queen Dowager has lost the use of one of her lungs and that the other was very delicate” and a generation which knew nothing of tuberculosis talked of the “decline” into which Adelaide had fallen.

Her poor health made her unduly sensitive. In August Queen Victoria wrote to King Leopold from Windsor:

“You will forgive me if I mention it to you, but I understand that the Queen Dowager has been somewhat offended at your not taking leave of her when she came here, and at your not answering her when she wrote to you. Perhaps you would write to her and soften and smoothen matters.”

In September she was at Sudbury Hall again, and, hearing that, after Melbourne’s second defeat in Parliament, the Queen had been obliged to give in over the Ladies of the Bed-chamber, and endeavouring to comfort her niece in these rather humiliating circumstances, she wrote:

“I must congratulate you with all my heart on having so well completed your difficult task.

“There is but one voice of praise, I hear, on your perfect composure and beautiful conduct during the trying scenes of last week. It has gratified me more than I can express, for I had fully expected it of you, and it has made me very happy to find that it . . . has given so much satisfaction.

“I trust that you will have perfect confidence in the able men who form your Council. Our beloved late King’s anxious wishes to see Wellington and Peel again at the head of the Administration is now fulfilled. His blessing rests upon you. . . .”

This letter was not at all well received at Claremont. Victoria, who resented having the “beloved late King” quoted at her,

flared up at once; and Anson noted in his diary: "The Queen had a letter from the Queen Dowager, which was kindly meant, but which made Her Majesty rather angry. . . ." The young Queen was expecting her second baby shortly, and neither lady was feeling quite herself, but all was soon forgiven and forgotten in their mutual rejoicing over the birth of the Prince of Wales.

In the autumn, despite her cough, Adelaide planned a round of North Country visits and even contemplated a tour in Scotland. On September 17th she went with the Duchess of Gloucester to Belton as the guest of Lord and Lady Brownlow.

In October she stayed with the widowed Lord Howe and his ten children at Gopsall, and from there she returned to Belton. She was delayed at Leicester while the horses were changed, and retired from the public gaze into the Three Crowns Inn, "where, being informed the anniversary sermon for the benefit of the Leicester Infirmary was being preached, Her Majesty gave £50 in aid of the funds." She then visited the Marquis of Hastings at Donnington Park. She had intended to go on to Burleigh, to stay with the Marquis of Exeter, and then to Belvoir, but on November 6th it was announced that she was very ill at Sudbury and that Dr. Chambers had been fetched from London. Bulletins were issued from Marlborough House: "The Queen Dowager is suffering from much exhaustion consequent on the catarrhal inflammation."

By the 16th she was believed to be dying, and it was reported, wrongly, that she was deprived of speech. In her own hand she wrote her directions for her funeral:

"I die in all humility, knowing well that we are all alike before the Throne of God, and I request therefore that my mortal remains be conveyed to the grave without any pomp or state. They are to be moved to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, where I request to have as private and quiet a funeral as possible. I particularly desire *not to be laid out in State* and the funeral to take place by *Daylight*, no procession. The coffin to be carried by Sailors to the Chapel. All those of my Friends and Relations to a limited number who wish to attend may do so. My nephew Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, Lords Howe and Denbigh, the Honble. W. Ashley, Mr.

Ward, Sir A. Burnard and Sir D. Davies with my Dressers and those of my ladies who may wish to attend. . . .

“I request not to be dissected nor embalmed and desire to give as little trouble as possible.

“I shall die in Peace with the world and full of gratitude for all the kindness that was ever shown to me and in full reliance to the Mercy of our Saviour Jesus Christ, in whose hands I commit my soul.

“Adelaide R.”

She had seen eight Royal funerals, all badly arranged and disgracefully conducted, most of them taking place, as was customary, at night, which tended to increase the gloom and confusion; and she wished hers to be different.

But she did not die at Sudbury. When, after three weeks, Dr. Chambers returned to London it was realised that since she was not dead she must be better. At the end of November Sir David Davis, her domestic physician, ceased to issue further bulletins, as she was sitting up; and on the 29th Queen Victoria wrote to King Leopold, “The Queen Dowager is recovering wonderfully.” Considering that she had only one lung, that her illness was a hæmorrhage due to consumption and that she was too ill to move out of range of the Derbyshire winter, her recovery appears nothing short of a miracle; and the further £3,000 that she gave at Christmas to Malta Cathedral was probably a thank-offering.

Replying to Queen Victoria’s new year greetings she wrote:

“ . . . I deeply feel all your affectionate kindness to me in wishing my life to be prolonged. From ill-health I have become such a useless member of your family, that I must wonder you have not long been tired of me. I wish I was more able to be of any use to you. . . . My services would be most faithful, I can assure you. Should my life be spared, there may perhaps yet be a time when I can prove to you, that what I say is not merely a *façon de parler*, but my sincere wish.

“Your approbation of my little offering to my dear godchild gives me much pleasure. It occupied me several days during my illness to make the drawing, weak as I then was, and it was a pleasant occupation.

"We have frost again with a clear blue sky, which is much better for me than the damp, close weather of last week, which oppressed me so much. I breathe again, and my spirits get their usual tone, which they had lost, but I still cough a great deal, which is very fatiguing. . . ."

It is remarkable that Adelaide invariably wrote correct English. Comparisons with the phonetic epistolary efforts of Queen Caroline, who mispronounced English and spelt it exactly as she pronounced it, despite the fact that it was her mother's native tongue, are very favourable to Queen Adelaide.

On January 21st she was so far recovered as to be able to move to London. It seems very extraordinary, in view of the fact that she was afterwards made to keep to her upstairs room at Marlborough House for two months lest she should be subjected to sudden changes of temperature, that she should have been allowed to make the long road journey at that time of the year.

Before she left Sudbury, Howe received on her behalf a deputation of local clergy, who came to thank her for her great liberality in the neighbourhood; and he read them her reply, in which she said that she was grateful to be in a position to give "owing to the generosity of the late King and the nation."

Although she had to live in one room at Marlborough House, she took a great interest in all that went on around, and insisted on seeing her friends and relations.

Her first guest was her cousin, Prince Ernest of Hesse Philipsthal, who had lost a leg in battle many years before, and came to London from time to time to be fitted for a new leg "made like Lord Anglesea's."

Her next visitor was the King of Prussia, who came over in his capacity of godfather for the christening of the future King Edward VII.

"I am delighted with the hope of seeing you" (she wrote to the proud mamma at Windsor); "if you have time to spare when you come to town next week, I hardly dare to expect it, but it will make me very happy should you be able to fulfil your kind intention.

"I was happy to hear how well the holy ceremony went off on

Tuesday. . . . The earnest attention of the King of Prussia to the ceremony and the manner with which he read the responses, was universally remarked and admired. . . ."

In March her eldest step-son, Lord Munster, shot himself at his house in Upper Belgrave Street—oddly enough with a pistol given him by George IV.

"Charles Fox attributes it entirely to the vexatious and uneasy life which he led with Lady Munster" (wrote Melbourne to Queen Victoria), "but he was always . . . an unhappy and discontented man, and there is something in that unfortunate condition of illegitimacy which seems to distort the mind and feelings and render them incapable of justice and contentment."

The only comforting circumstance for Queen Adelaide was that he was given Christian burial at Hampton parish church.

Early in April she came downstairs for the first time; and a few days later drove to Bushey, where her nephew, Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar, came to stay with her. She made a noble effort to entertain him, but the poor young man may not have found it very amusing to be driven over to Frogmore to call upon the Duchess of Kent, and thence to St. George's Chapel to visit the tomb of the late King.

She returned to Town in June in order to attend Hullak's Choral Meeting at Exeter Hall; and on the 19th she took the Duke and Duchess of Saxe-Meiningen on a house-hunting expedition in the Isle of Wight. Her doctors had told her that she must not spend another winter in Derbyshire.

She made the first part of the journey by train. This was indeed a dashing thing to do.

Railways were very new indeed. It was only two years since the completion of the first line to run into the Metropolis; and the L.S.W.R. line, on which she travelled to Southampton from Nine Elms (then its London terminus), though opened in 1838, had only recently been extended beyond Woking.

Queen Victoria had made her first railway journey from Slough to London only five days before "in half an hour, free from dust and crowd and heat, and I am quite charmed with it." The

Sovereign was young and modern, but the older generation mistrusted the new means of locomotion. After travelling at twenty-three miles an hour, Creevey thought:

"The quickest motion is to me frightful: it is impossible to divest yourself of the notion of instant death to all upon the least accident happening. It gave me a headache which has not left me yet."

The Duke of Wellington, who had always opposed railways on the ground that "they would encourage the lower orders to move about," refused absolutely to travel by train until several years later, when he was obliged to do so, being in attendance upon the Queen.

For Queen Adelaide to travel by train in 1842 was just as venturesome and remarkable as it would have been had Queen Alexandra travelled by air in 1924; and considering that she was generally regarded as a dying woman, it must have required considerable courage and enterprise to undertake such a journey.

From Southampton the party paddled over to Ryde in a "government steamboat." They found no suitable house in the island and returned another way in order to look at Highcliffe Castle, but this they turned down also. The coast of the New Forest had been recommended by Dr. Chambers, who had a house there called Hordle Cliff.

Early in September Queen Adelaide was back at Bushey, where she received a visit from the Duchess of Kent.

"Your Mamma's visit gave me great pleasure," she wrote to Victoria, "and it has been a great treat to me to hear her sing again, and so well, which put me in mind of former happy days."

On September 8th the *Dorset County Chronicle* informed its readers:

"We have much satisfaction in announcing that the County of Dorset is about to be honoured in its selection by her Majesty the Queen Dowager for an autumnal *sejour*. Her Majesty, whose medical attendants have advised her residence in the south of England during the approaching season, has fixed upon Canford House, the delightful seat of Lord de Mauley; . . . It is our earnest prayer that the amiable princess about to be a resident

within its walls may there find that invigorated health, without which all human blessings are vain indeed."

Lord and Lady de Mauley were at home making all the necessary preparations, and it was hoped the Queen would arrive in time to attend a bazaar which was to be held at Merley House, formerly the Dower House, for the benefit of the Holt National and Sunday Schools. She did not arrive in time for this, after all, but she sent some of her own needlework to be sold.

A week later the Poole correspondent of the *Dorset County Chronicle* reported that "Part of her Majesty's furniture, etc., arrived here yesterday by Bloomfield's fast sailing smack *Harmony* from Cotton's wharf, London, to be forwarded to Canford House. . . ."

On September 27th she left Bushey, attended by Lord Howe and his daughter Georgina, Lord Denbigh, Lady Clinton, John Ryle Wood, now a Canon, and Sir David Davis. They were seen off at Nine Elms and received at Southampton by local notabilities and officials, and travelled in a special train which took two and three-quarter hours. The Queen herself asked that the train should travel at its normal pace, "so as not to delay other traffic"; but whether the special train would otherwise have gone faster or slower is not clear. From Southampton the party drove in six carriages-and-four through Stony Cross, Ringwood and Longham to Canford, where "the day fixed for her Majesty's journey having been known but a short time previously, such arrangements as the time permitted were made to give her Majesty a worthy welcome."

"On entering the County of Dorset, her Majesty was received by a troop of Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry, under the command of Capt. H. Frampton. . . . With this escort her Majesty and suite, attended also by a very long procession of some hundred horsemen, who had joined at the same time, proceeded . . . to the village of Canford.

"The sides of the road were throughout thronged with crowds of respectable people, eager to catch a glimpse of her Majesty. . . . Poole and Wimborne and all the neighbouring villages, had poured out their tides of population, and in the Village of Canford

on the approach by which her Majesty was to arrive, from five to six thousand persons at least were assembled, in carriages of all descriptions and on foot; and as her Majesty passed every voice was raised in a hearty cheer of greeting. . . .

"At the entrance of the village, close to the Vicarage, a handsome triumphal arch had been erected, tastily furnished with evergreens and decorated with the word 'Adelaide' in richly coloured dahlias. Over this was a display of flags; and by the side of the road near it, the children of the village schools (who have all been newly and uniformly clothed by the benevolence of the Queen Dowager) were ranged, each bearing a bouquet of flowers. . . .

"Banners were likewise displayed from several of the houses; the bells in the Church tower continued ringing; and the excellent Poole brass band was stationed in the park near the entrance of the Mansion, to greet her Majesty with a strain of welcome.

"The Queen Dowager, who, we are grateful to say, appeared better than we could have expected, was evidently much pleased with the enthusiastic manner in which she was received and repeatedly acknowledged by graciously bowing and by gratified looks, her sense of the loyalty and good feeling manifested by the assembled crowds. . . .

"The day was the gayest and most bustling ever known in the Village, and one feeling and one wish only seemed to animate all present—a feeling of devoted attachment to the illustrious Princess whom they were met to honour; and a wish that her sojourn in this neighbourhood may tend to preserve her in sound health, and to prolong a life spent in the exercise of exalted virtue and in the diffusion of kindness and charity."

This exhausting reception at the end of what, even to-day, would be considered a long and tiring journey, but in those days was a formidable undertaking for an invalid—especially the twenty-mile drive across the New Forest with her equestrian escort—probably accounted for her non-acceptance of the gallant Dorset Yeomanry Cavalry's offer to escort her back to Southampton at the end of her visit. Howe wrote to Colonel Frampton, "Her Majesty begs to thank Col. Frampton very much for all his kindness on this and on a former occasion, but she wishes her departure to be quite private."

Characteristically, Adelaide did not occupy the principal bed-chamber herself. She left it for her guests, and chose a smaller room, long and narrow, looking southward across the park. From its Gothic window (the existing larger windows date only from 1846) she could see the Great Chestnut, sole survivor of a group of four which, planted at least as early as 1100, had seen a very different kind of crowned head at Canford, that of King John.

Her stay was full of activity:

“The weather . . . has hitherto been most favourable and scarcely a day passes in which the Queen, attended by her suite to the number of sixteen or eighteen, may not be seen taking equestrian exercise in the neighbourhood.”

It seems incredible that she should have the pluck to ride again. Her favourite walk, named after her, is now wrongly called Queen Anne's Walk and no longer exists as an avenue, having been allowed to disintegrate. She also took long drives to visit her neighbours as far afield as Bournemouth and St. Giles, and invited them to dine at Canford. Friends and relations came to stay with her, among whom were the Earl and Countess Grosvenor, the Duchess of Kent and the Duke of Cambridge.

They told her all the family news: Prince George of Hanover was looking for a bride; and Princess Augusta of Cambridge was engaged to the future Grand Duke of Mecklenburg. Woman-like, Adelaide was interested in the provision made for them, and wrote to Queen Victoria:

“. . . I always had imagined that the Duke of Cambridge was rich and would give a fortune to his daughters, but I have lately heard that it is not the case. . . . If the young couple are to live . . . with the Grand Duke they will not want any Plate, but if they are to have a separate *ménage*, then they will want it. I shall find it out by and by. I wonder that the Duchess likes to part with her fine sapphires. I thought the turquoises had been intended for Augusta. . . .

“I wish you could see the Convent to which I went the other day. The nuns belong to the Order of the Cistercian Trappists. They are not allowed to speak amongst themselves—what a relief my visit must have been to them!”

There follows a charming account of this visit. The Queen and the Reverend Mother, who held similar views on revolutions, conversed in French; she made several purchases of needlework, and upon her return home the nuns sent her a wreath of flowers.

Canford House was considered very modern. It had been rebuilt by Blore, the architect of the "Palace at Pimlico," in 1825 in the soi-disant Tudor-Gothic style then prevalent. Adelaide fitted up the smaller room in John o' Gaunt's Kitchen as a Chapel, and John Wood conducted a daily service there. She also sent him along to Canford Magna Church to help the Vicar, and herself attended divine service there every Sunday afternoon. She handed out money liberally to all local good causes, especially village schools.

Meiningen was famous for its schools, and in educational matters was far in advance of contemporary England. Adelaide had been amazed to find how few English people could read or write. Unlike many of her contemporaries, who feared the increasing power of the labouring classes and who adopted an attitude of *après moi, le déluge*, the Queen realised that the *déluge* had better be taught to read and write, and that only by means of education could mob-rule be averted and replaced by a law-abiding democracy. In this she was very modern. Even Lord Melbourne, the Whig Prime Minister, told Queen Victoria that he was against the education of the poor and thought parents should be allowed to send their children into factories.

"It would be unnecessary" (said the *Dorset County Chronicle*), "for us to dwell upon her Majesty's munificent benevolence towards the extension of our National Church" (which was building most of the Schools) "and in aid of charitable institutions for the sick and distressed since we have been honoured with her residence in this County, known as these are far and wide; and although we do not believe it is at all gratifying to her Majesty to have her good deeds blazoned abroad, knowing, as we do, that they are done from a far purer motive than the desire of public praise, in the prospect of a more lasting reward—yet, from urgent requests made to us . . . we feel that we should hardly be justified in keeping her recent charitable acts . . . from our readers."

There were also "repeated charitable kindnesses of several attached to her Majesty's Household." The Ladies in Waiting came and went: Lady Clinton was succeeded by Countess Brownlow, who was followed by Lady Sheffield and Lady Mayo; and the Maids of Honour changed at half-time.

In December she was ill. Her carriage got jammed in "a rather unfrequented road in the forest" and could neither proceed nor turn. "The horses were immediately unharnessed and affixed to the hinder part of the carriage to draw it out of the lane, when her Majesty became alarmed, and alighting from her carriage walked upon the wet grass, thereby getting her feet damp, and bringing on a cold, which, flying to the chest, caused some apprehension." Seeing how fond she was of horses and how accustomed she had been in her early married life to nerve-racking carriage journeys, it was possibly the Duchess of Kent, who was with her, who persuaded her to get out.

She weathered the winter far better than her most optimistic friends could have dared to hope; but that she was still not her old self in January is apparent from an epistolary tiff she had with Queen Victoria about the christening of a German princelet.

. . . "I own I was not a little surprised to find that you are . . . the godmother . . ." (she wrote). "I remember well what you said to me when I was asked to be the godmother of the first boy, '*that I could not accept it,*' as I must not take the responsibilities attached to a sponsor with a Roman Catholic child. On that ground alone, and having learned your opinion which sanctioned my own, I refused it then at the risk of offending the dear parents. Now, after all that was said on the subject, if *you have accepted* the offer of becoming sponsor to the little Victor, *you*, as the Head of the English Church, give to understand that I was wrong in my notions of the duties which our Church imposes upon sponsors, having refused what you accepted. I tell you fairly and openly that it has vexed me, but of course I say this only to *yourself*, dearest Victoria, and not to any one else, for it does not become me to find fault with what you please to do. . . . I beg your pardon for thus frankly stating my feelings to you on a subject which I shall now despatch from my mind. . . ."

"I am at a loss to comprehend, my dear Aunt" (replied

Victoria from Claremont), "what you mean by saying that you refused being godmother to Thesy's first child, as *I* had sanctioned you doing so. I never remember ever talking to you on the subject, but only heard from Mamma that you had refused. . . . I am grieved, dearest Aunt, that this occurrence should annoy you, but I can *assure* you that I do not remember *ever* having spoken to you on the subject at all."

But this contretemps was soon forgiven and forgotten, and they were again on the old affectionate terms when Adelaide wrote to her niece to congratulate her on her wedding anniversary:

"Your happiness . . . is most gratifying to my feelings, having loved you from your infancy almost as much as if you had been my own child. . . . I shall hope to follow you to Town early next month. . . .

"Forgive my horrible scrawl, and with my best love to dearest Albert, believe me, ever, my dearest Victoria, your most affectionate and faithfully devoted Aunt,

"Adelaide."

The Queen Dowager returned to London by the same route as that by which she had come, and her departure was "quite private."

"The gifts of the Queen to the poor of Canford and Kinson, in coal, blankets and necessary clothing, besides which the weekly relief granted from the house to the major part of the poor of Canford, with numerous other instances of the Royal bounty, cannot but make her departure a cause of real regret to the humble recipients. But, though these will feel their loss, their gratitude to, and their prayers for, the good Queen Adelaide, will follow her Majesty wherever she may sojourn."

No wonder the Canford people hoped she would return!

Another link with the past broke when the Duke of Sussex died of erysipelas at Kensington. Unlike his objectionable brother of Cumberland, the poor blind old man had been a loyal if embarrassing friend and subject both to William IV and Queen Victoria; and Adelaide was anxious lest his departure should affect the health of her niece, who was expecting her third child at any moment.

On her way to Marlborough House she called at Kensington,

and when she reached home she wrote to tell Victoria all about her visit.

“ I am just back and feel very anxious to know how you are, and beg at the same time to offer to you my most affectionate condolence on the melancholy event which has taken again another member of our family from us. . . .

“ I have been with the poor Duchess of Inverness on my way to Town, and found her as composed as possible under the sad circumstances, and full of gratitude to you and all the family for all the kindness which she had received. I pity her very much. It must be her comfort to have made the last years of the Duke’s life happy, and to have been his comfort to the last moment. . . .”

By this time the Duchess of Inverness

“ was quite a personage in London society. She was small of stature, old-fashioned in dress, and quaint, rather than distinguished, in appearance, but her kindness of heart and general *bonhomie* secured for her a large circle of friends.”

Augustus caused some embarrassment by expressing the wish

“ that on my death my body may be opened, and should the examination present anything useful or interesting to science, I empower my executors to make it public. And I desire to be buried in the public cemetery at Kensal Green . . . and not at Windsor.”

This latter request was made so that his beloved “ Ciss ” could lie beside him, and it was in keeping with the democratic tenor of his life. In his two marriages with commoners, in his devotion to Freemasonry and his interest in all scientific progress and liberal thought, he was born ahead of his time. It amazed his contemporaries that George III and Queen Charlotte could have produced such a child.

In June the King of Hanover came to England, ostensibly for the christening of Victoria’s newest baby, since he was her godfather; but he “ arrived just in time to be too late,” wrote the Queen to Uncle Leopold. “ He is grown very old and excessively thin, and bends a good deal. He is very gracious, for *him*.

Pussy and Bertie were not at all afraid of him, fortunately." "The Duchess of Gloucester takes him about to keep his mouth shut," wrote Colonel Dawson Damer. But King Ernest was prepared to play the part of the Bad Fairy at the Royal christening, for he refused to go home without the Hanoverian crown jewels. His niece dealt with him magnificently:

"The Queen is desirous that whatever is right should be done" (she wrote to the Prime Minister), "but is strongly of opinion that the King of Hanover's threat . . . not to leave this country till the affair is decided upon, should in *no way* influence the transaction, as it is quite immaterial whether the King stays longer here or not."

And he went, without the jewels; though eventually he got them.

Meanwhile the Queen Dowager was taken ill at Marlborough House and was not able to attend the wedding of Princess Augusta at Buckingham Palace. The bejewelled bride wore a wreath of orange flowers and myrtle "on the front of her hair, and behind that, three tiaras given by Mama, Fritz (the bridegroom) and the Queen Dowager. . . . Her necklace was of diamonds, also given by the Queen Dowager," recorded her sister, Princess Mary.

At the end of July Queen Adelaide had recovered sufficiently to be moved to Bushey; but the Thames Valley was too foggy for her in winter and she was looking out for another country home. Canford was no longer available; and Lord Ward offered her Witley Court, near Worcester, which he had just bought from Lord Foley for an immense sum. Howe went to see it in June, and evidently reported favourably, for she moved there in August 1843.

In November Queen Victoria proposed to visit her; but as the railway journey was very complicated and the station at Birmingham on two levels, which meant that the Queen would have to leave the Royal train there, Sir Robert Peel suggested that both queens should stay with him at Drayton Manor instead, which they did.

Adelaide arrived at Tamworth station a day later than her niece,



QUEEN ADELAIDE, 1849 (*after Winterhalter*)

By gracious permission of His Majesty the King

accompanied by Prince Edward of Saxe-Weimar and attended by Lady Brownlow and Lord Howe. She drove to Drayton escorted by the Staffordshire Yeomanry. From there they all went on to Belvoir Castle early in December.

Although Queen Adelaide's health was getting steadily worse, she refused to behave like an invalid, and continued to travel about in mid-winter by railroad, visiting new places. New faces, however, tired her; and she preferred the company of old and familiar friends. But since they were for the most part her seniors, one by one they were taking their leave of her. Lady Mayo had died soon after their return from Canford in the spring, and the Queen missed her for her humour and sincerity. She once said to Lady Glengall: "I understand you said I was the ugliest woman in the world"; to which Lady Glengall replied affably: "Well, I must say, Lady Mayo, I think you are the most frightful woman I ever saw in my life."

There were other changes in her Household too. Lord Howe remarried.

"Don't be angry with Miss Gore" (wrote Lady Lyttelton to her daughter); "I can understand any girl being almost in love with Lord Howe, though he is ugly and childridden, and what you might call old. But he is so excellent a man, and has so delightful a manner—so exceedingly gentlemanlike and sensible—and a fine voice, too, that I give my consent."

The new Lady Howe was Anne Gore, the daughter of one of Queen Adelaide's ladies and an old friend of Bushey days. In 1831 she had gone to Brighton to help amuse Princess Louise, and Lady Bedingfeld, who was in charge of the party, described her then as "a handsome and delightful girl and well principled, but she knows a great deal of the world for her age." She was now thirty-five.

It would seem a most suitable arrangement—but under the circumstances some people felt a little sorry, for the Queen Dowager's sake. Four former widowed Queens of England had married English noblemen. . . .

Anybody but Adelaide would have been furiously angry; but the second Lady Howe was welcomed into her Household, and

things went on as before. She continued to live simply, driving, painting and embroidering, giving away her money, and writing letters to an ever-diminishing circle.

And a new and rapidly expanding family of Royal children were learning to look forward to the visits of the kind Great Aunt who talked to them like grown-ups, produced treasures of all kinds from her work-box, never criticised their behaviour or appearance, and told them heavily censored stories of the court of good Queen Charlotte.

Chapter 16 : *THE QUEEN CHANGES CROWNS, 1844-1849*

“ *He first deceas’d—She, for a little, try’d
To live without him, lik’d it not & dy’d.*”

HENRY WOOTTON ON THE DEATH OF
SIR ALBERTUS AND LADY MORTON

EACH spring she returned to London to do her bit of entertaining, and to put in an appearance at Court. In June 1844 the distinguished guest was the Tzar; and after he had been safely bowed out of England unassassinated, the Royal family heaved a sigh of relief and dispersed for their summer holidays.

Adelaide went to Meiningen, where a great welcome always awaited her. She travelled by rail from the Bricklayers Arms to Dover, and gave gold watches to the driver and fireman of the train. She returned in July, and while her luggage was transferred to her waiting carriages, she sat on the deck of H.M.S. *Black Eagle*, a paddle steamer, and contemplated the beauties of Woolwich. The old *Royal George* was by now a hulk at Portsmouth. Her doom was sealed after taking Queen Victoria to Scotland in 1842. Although she was towed by two steamers, the *Prince Consort* thought her slow and out of date, everybody was seasick and the party returned in a paddle-boat. The order was given immediately for the building of the *Victoria and Albert I.*

In September Adelaide graced the christening of the Duke of Edinburgh, and after the drinking of her health, the band played “The Queen Dowager’s March.”

She spent Christmas at Witley Court with her nephews, and before leaving London arranged for her customary distribution of beef and bread to 800 families living near Bushey.

In 1846 she visited Meiningen and returned to England with the Princess of Prussia, better known as the Empress Augusta, wife of the Emperor William I and mother-in-law of the unhappy Empress Frederick. She was a niece of the Duchess Ida, and it was apparently Queen Adelaide who first introduced her to Queen

Victoria, with whom she became great friends. They stayed at Norris Castle, which the Queen Dowager had just acquired from Lord Henry Seymour, and in August they both lunched at Osborne, "always the cause of lame legs to all officials past thirty," wrote Lady Lyttelton, and she added: "My dear Queen Dowager seems well; very nice as always." As the Princess of Prussia had not visited the Court before, the officials' lame legs must have been due to the walking abilities of the Queen Dowager. She was doubtless a more welcome guest at Osborne than the Duke of Cambridge, who, being very deaf, once observed *fortissimo* to Lady Lyttelton within two chairs of the Queen: "How do you get on here? Rather dull, hey?"

Meanwhile Adelaide, who must have travelled more than any Queen before her, had moved into yet another country house.

Cassiobury, near Watford, which she had rented for three years from the Earl of Essex, was considered one of the finest mansions in England, and had been largely rebuilt by Wyatt in 1802 with a fine suite of reception rooms. Set in a magnificent deer-park facing south-east, with gardens planned by Le Notre, and with an orangery to sit in during the winter, it appeared ideally suited for Queen Adelaide. There was even a state bedchamber ready for her, its walls covered with Beauvais tapestry and the gilt bed hung with white and gold satin.

There were other attractions too. An almost royal pew with "red curtains hanging on brass rails with handsome standards," entered by a winding stairway, awaited her in Watford parish church; and a "prettily decorated" enclosed staircase was especially built for her at the railway station. The station has since moved further up the line, but the stairs remain.

The nearness of the railway made travelling easy, and she frequently came and went. On September 7th the Duchess of Cambridge came to stay, followed a little later by Queen Victoria, and together they drove to nearby Bentley Priory to call on the Marquess of Abercorn. The Princess of Prussia remained with her until the end of September; and they thought nothing of going to lunch with the Cambridges at Kew and back in the same day.

On September 25th, accompanied by the Princess of Prussia and attended by Lady Clinton and Lord Howe, the Queen Dowager went to spend the week-end at Windsor.

One of Queen Victoria's Maids of Honour, in describing Lord Howe as "quite charming," observed: "Lady Howe has just got a boy, her eleventh child alive, and she has lost two; I think they could be spared." Poor Lady Howe had only been married a year, and although her husband already had ten children by his first marriage, this was her first baby!

On the Sunday after church they all, "Queens and subjects," went to see the stables; and in the evening the Queen Dowager took the Princess to St. George's Chapel. Afterwards they all walked on the Terrace, and Adelaide insisted on going out too, "tho' Lord Howe read her a lecture and Lady Clinton looked reprovingly at her for her imprudence, as it was within a few minutes of six o'clock."

On the Tuesday morning the Queen Dowager kissed Queen Victoria and her ladies "lovingly," and accompanied by the Duchess of Kent returned to Marlborough House for lunch, going together afterwards "to see the operation," which, though surgical-sounding, was merely the erection of Wellington's statue (to which Queen Adelaide had subscribed £200) at Hyde Park Corner.

She was disappointed in Cassiobury. It lacked privacy: the Grand Junction Canal passed through the middle of the Park (a large part of which was open to the public); the mansion was practically in Watford; and the railway, the main line to the north, was growing busier and noisier each year. The house contained sanguinary relics of King Charles's execution, which continually recalled to her mind the strife which so distressed her, and she was ill most of the time. Whatever the reason, "it was understood her physicians thought the place unhealthy"; and she decided to spend the winter of 1847 in Madeira.

She made the most of the summer, however, spending May in London and finding time to take Victoria's children to the Drury Lane Circus, where she occupied her own box. In June she visited Meiningen for the last time, travelling from Ramsgate to

Ostend; and in August she was at the Ryde regatta aboard the Queen's yacht *Fairy*.

In October she set sail for Madeira.

An autumn voyage in the Atlantic, with oil lamps, salt meat and ships' biscuits, was not the treatment usually advocated in those days for middle-aged queens with only one lung—especially when they were exceptionally bad sailors—but Adelaide had learnt from her husband to put her trust in the wooden walls of old England and refused to be deprived of the fresh air she rightly felt she needed.

The party, consisting of the Duchess Ida and several children, Lady Clinton, Sir David Davis, the Rev. J. Hudson, "five female attendants, four ladies' maids, seven female servants, two pages, two *valets-de-chambre*, twelve footmen and two male and two female cooks" embarked at Portsmouth, where Adelaide had a tremendous ovation at the railway station. They sailed in H.M.S. *Howe*. The weather was very rough and a sailor was washed overboard and nearly drowned. The Queen was very concerned about this and on the following Sunday, thinking the sermon preached by the ship's chaplain from Hebrews ix. 22 inappropriate, she sent for the seaman and gave him a talk herself, "by which he appeared very touched."

At Lisbon she went ashore to visit Maria da Gloria; and the remaining seven days' sailing was so calm that the suite danced on board each night.

In lovely weather she landed at Funchal and was carried in a sedan chair along a path strewn with myrtle flowers to the Quinta des Augustrias, where she and the Duchess were lodged. Before entering the house she insisted on seeing the accommodation provided for the suite in the Governor's villa. Later she moved further from the town to the Quinta Lambert, whose lovely garden reached to the cliff's edge. She lived very quietly, riding and walking in the sunshine—but her liberality never ceased. She gave generously to the poor, and even built a new road from Ribeiro Sacco to Camaro de Lobos for the benefit of the fishermen. She hoped the sunshine would enable her to take up the threads of public life again.

But when she returned to Portsmouth in April, visiting the Queen at Osborne on the way, she was no better, and she knew she had come home to die.

After thirty years she had grown to love England.

In Queen Charlotte's marriage-treaty provision had been made for her return to Mecklenburg in her widowhood should she so desire. When Adelaide became queen, the Cabinet proposed to make similar plans for her; but the King turned the suggestion down, saying it was unnecessary since *his* Queen would certainly not wish to return to Germany.

Adelaide was never consulted about this; and during the Reform riots how often must she have longed for the day when, William needing her no longer, she would be free to return to the sunshine and healing waters of Liebenstein!

Now, she was glad she had remained in England; for she had grown fond of the pale sunlight and wet meadows and shingly beaches; and to her, Bushey, with its mellow brick walls and chestnut trees, was home.

Nevertheless in 1848 she offered it to the exiled Duc de Nemours. The French Royal family, most of whom had taken refuge at Claremont, were indeed in a pitiful situation. Victoria told Melbourne of

"the *real want* the poor King and Queen are in, their dinner-table containing barely enough to eat. And the poor Nemours hardly know which way to turn. . . . Nothing could be kinder than the Queen Dowager's behaviour towards them all."

Louis Philippe and Queen Amélie were to Adelaide's mind even more deserving objects for coal and blankets than the old women of Watford; and she never understood that the reason why, alone in Europe (save for Uncle Leopold's up-to-date Belgian kingdom), the Throne of Great Britain did not rock, was the passing of the much-dreaded Reform Bill sixteen years before and the modern conception of court life which had first blossomed in the reign of William IV.

Just as she had learned to love England, so the English people had at long last learned to love and value her. They began to

understand what she had had to suffer from "the temper of the times."

She began to feel very lonely. Princess Sophia died in May at Kensington, and following the example set by the Duke of Sussex, was buried at Kensal Green. Of all George III's enormous family only two were left—and his Hanoverian Majesty, Ernest, seemed determined to go on living for ever, if living long enough would bring him the English Crown. Even the Duchess of Gloucester was going a little funny in the head. Queen Victoria reported to Uncle Leopold that she was

"again in one of her nervous states, and gave us a dreadful fright at the Christening" (in May of Princess Louise) "by quite forgetting where she was, and coming and kneeling at my feet in the midst of the service. Imagine our horror!"

Adelaide also attended this christening as proxy for her sister-in-law, the Duchess of Meiningen, and held the baby at the font. She wore "white lace and a turban ornamented with brilliants."

The third generation was growing up rapidly and, as the newspapers put it, "the Infant Royal family continue in excellent health"; and Adelaide delighted them with her well-chosen presents. She gave Victoria's babies "a beautiful little barouche, big enough for them to drive about in, drawn by a Shetland pony. The children were in perfect raptures, screaming with delight."

But there were not to be many more presents from Aunt Adelaide. During her absence her things had been moved from Cassiobury to nearby Bentley Priory, which she rented for three years from the Marquess of Abercorn, and in November 1848 the Queen and Prince Consort spent two days with her there.

This house, which had been rebuilt at the end of the eighteenth century under the direction of Sir John Soane, was famous for its lovely garden, and in particular for its vineries, ferneries, rockeries and rhododendrons. There was a picture gallery and a circular music-room modelled on the tribune in the Uffizi. The twenty-seven-foot staircase was too stiff a climb for an invalid, and she chose two rooms on the ground floor for her bedroom and boudoir. A door led from them into a huge conservatory. Here she sat on

wet days among the palms and orange-trees, pretending she was in Madeira. When it was warmer she would walk in the lime avenue or sit quietly in the summer-house named after her. Sometimes she drove into the village, with shawls and pounds of tea for the aged and infirm. At the beginning of the twentieth century the inhabitants of Stanmore still spoke of her many kindnesses to her poorer neighbours. In the spring of 1849 she visited Bushey, and became alarmingly ill. Her doctors moved her to Worthing and thence to Tunbridge Wells. But she knew that her work here was finished and returned to spend her last June at Bushey. In September she went back to Bentley Priory, and her last public act was to lay the foundation stone of the new church at Great Stanmore, to which she gave the font and alms dishes. The east window was afterwards dedicated to her memory.

It was at Bentley Priory that she died.

At the end of October the news reached Windsor that she was seriously ill.

"Bright . . . feared she had yet a great deal of suffering to go through, the cough and oppression are at times most painful; she has also had an attack of spasms, which is a cruel addition to her other illnesses. The Duchess of Saxe Weimar and her two daughters are in constant attendance upon her, assisted by a regular nurse at night. . . . She is not left to servants and strangers. . . ."

A few days later she "was going on just the same, very ill, but not likely to die immediately." The Queen and Prince Consort, followed by the Duchess of Kent, came to visit her at the end of November.

But she knew now that she would spend Christmas with her husband; and surrounded by sorrowing hearts and friendly faces she died early on Sunday, December 2nd, 1849.

From Dublin Prince George of Cambridge, who owed the fact that he had been brought up an Englishman and not a German largely to Queen Adelaide, wrote to his mother:

"Although I had been long expecting the sad intelligence, when it came . . . it upset me terribly, and I feel indeed I have lost a true dear relation and friend. . . . It is well with her, of that I

am assured, she was so good. . . . Yet her loss is quite terrible for all her surroundings and for the thousands who depended upon her kindness. For myself she was a remembrance of the dear, good old times, which alas! are past and gone. . . . Naturally I shall come over for the funeral, and I would not for anything fail to attend it, as indeed I am bound to pay my last duty and love to her, who has ever done so endlessly much for me."

From Osborne Queen Victoria wrote to King Leopold:

"I know *how* you would mourn with us over the death of our beloved Queen Adelaide. *We* have lost the kindest and dearest of friends, and the *universal* feeling of sorrow, of regret, and of *real* appreciation of her character is very touching and gratifying. *All parties, all classes*, join in doing her justice. Much was done to set Mamma against her, but the dear Queen ever forgave this, ever showed love and affection, and for the last eight years their friendship was as great as ever."

If only "*all parties, all classes*" had joined in doing her justice fifteen years earlier, when she was young and gay, and had not waited to show their "*real appreciation*" until it was too late!

She was mourned as much by the erring as by the very virtuous. The Duchesse de Dino wrote from France:

"She was a noble woman who bore herself with grand and simple dignity in positions that were difficult for several reasons. . . . I was treated by her with a kindness which I shall never forget."

"She was ever ready to go to her place of eternal rest, where she will find that happiness which she never knew here," said Princess Hohenlohe. "Let her life be an example to us!"

She left a hundred legatees. The five rings which the King had given her on her marriage went to his four surviving daughters and Lady Frederick Fitzclarence; and she bequeathed the statue of the infant Princess Elizabeth to Queen Victoria, that it might remain for ever at Windsor. To Lord Howe she left a Bible and her writing things, but this bequest was considered injudicious and indelicate and was ignored by the executors.

Among the papers they found the directions for her funeral which she had herself written so carefully at Sudbury eight years before.

On Thursday, December 13th, a Guard of Honour was mounted at Bentley Priory, and early in the pale sunlight of the misty winter morning the *cortège* left for Windsor. The red coats of the soldiers stood out against the fog. The cottagers of Stanmore stood at their garden gates to see the procession pass. Church bells tolled in the villages and the shops were closed.

Before the hearse, in Queen Adelaide's own carriage, rode her equerry, Captain Taylor, carrying her Crown—that Crown for which she had paid herself, with which Archbishop Howley had crowned her nearly twenty years before, which she had been so loth to assume, which she had worn so faithfully, and the weight of which had tired her out.

At Slough the procession was joined by the Prince Consort and four of Queen Victoria's carriages—the Queen herself, having an engagement with a baby, remained at Osborne—and was received at Windsor by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, the Duchess of Kent and the Duchess of Saxe-Weimar.

Ten naval ratings carried the little coffin covered with a velvet pall into St. George's Chapel. On either side walked her two step-sons, Frederick and Adolphus Fitzclarence, now very respectable middle-aged gentlemen. Two other sons in all but name, Prince Edward and Prince Gustave of Saxe-Weimar, were there too; and there were no Cabinet Ministers or Ambassadors or officials at all. Among the distinguished company there were humbler people too—her chaplains and physicians, her pages and wardrobe maids and dressers, who watched sorrowfully as Lord Howe knelt by the open grave and broke his staff of office.

In the presence of these her friends the mortal remains of the gentle Queen were laid to rest beside the King she served so loyally and the baby princess who had not wanted to wear an earthly crown.

"Nelson, Adelaide, Wellington," wrote Frederick Robertson to a friend in 1852, "these have been the *great* mournings of England in this century; and Peel, because men thought there was a sacrifice in him too, in his degree. Yes, Goodness, Duty, Sacrifice—these are the qualities that England honours."

EPILOGUE

ONE late November afternoon in 1849 as the Queen lay very still in her great four-poster at Bentley Priory, alone save for the nurse knitting quietly by the dim light of an oil lamp, she turned her eyes to the window, through which she saw the trees of the park wreathed in English mist.

A flickering glow from the fireplace made bars among the bed hangings; and all was silent save for the faint crunching of burning coal, the click of the knitting pins and the occasional whistle of a distant train.

It was getting dark. The Duchess Ida would soon be returning from her drive.

The round yellow globe of the lamp reminded Adelaide of the moon. . . .

The Queen's tired thoughts strayed to Altenstein—carpeted with snow now—and the moon creeping up among the branches of the white fir-trees. She recalled a great crackling log fire and another nurse, against whose comfortable Saxon knee two golden-haired little girls leaned, listening wide-eyed to the old fairy stories of the Thuringian Forest.

Snow White, Rumpelstiltskin and Goldilocks. They were real people to the highly-strung children in that great bare castle perched high among rocks and snow-laden Christmas trees.

Then there was Beauty, who had to marry to please her parents. . . . The Beast sounded so awful: was he like a dragon? Or maybe more like the Landgrave of Hesse-Homburg? How reassuring to know that the nurse would go on to tell how kind he proved to be and how Beauty's devotion to the poor bewitched monster would turn him back into a handsome prince. . . .

Again and again the elder little princess would beg the old peasant woman to repeat the story, until the younger sister, who was a realist, and of whom dear Mamma was so proud, found it

tedious, and said *she* intended to marry a nice ordinary Landgrave or an Elector, and didn't want to hear about the ugly old Beast any more.

Then the nurse would go on to tell other stories—of poor, virtuous, misunderstood princesses, and wicked stepmothers, and fairy godmothers, and beggar maids who became queens of great countries; but beautiful though these other tales were, the Princess Adelaide still pondered over the lonely Beast in the lovely garden.

The fatherless little girl, whose capable mother was always busy governing Meiningen and trying to appease Napoleon, knew what it was to be lonely. She knew she was considered a failure because she wanted to read and ride and build schools, and couldn't think of anything to say to nice young men who figured in the *Almanache de Gotha*; and she felt an ache in her heart for the poor Beast whom nobody loved. . . . Perhaps one day she would meet him.

As she lay in her wooden bed safely surrounded by calico curtains, listening to Ida's contented regular breathing and to the soft plop-plop of the snow as it fell from the high-pitched roofs of the castle, Adelaide wondered why all the correct young men whom Mamma invited to Altenstein were so very dull. How much more worth while to marry someone frightfully wicked who might love you and want to be different for your sake! . . .

The knitting needles were still; the nurse's crinoline rustled as she rose to draw the heavy velvet curtains to shut out the mist. The Duchess Ida came gently into the room carrying a candle; she moved softly to the bed to see if her sister were still awake. But the Queen's eyelids were closed. She did not want to have to smile—she wanted to go on day-dreaming. . . .

She saw a frightened, graceful girl, dressed in a demure pelisse and bonnet, getting out of a carriage in Albemarle Street and walking up the steps of Grillon's Hotel to meet Somebody terrifying—Somebody she had always known she would have to face one day, ever since the night on which she first heard the wonderful story. . . .

And he proved to be nearly as ugly as the Landgrave and much

wickeder than anybody Mamma had ever allowed her to meet before; yet he had been gentle and kind to her; and when she left him to revisit her old home had he not missed her so badly that he nearly died?

In a setting of railroads and paddle-steamers and gaslight, the story had come true. Because he grew to love his wife so dearly, this uncouth and terrifying personage had been changed into a brave and upright King.

At dinner that night the Duchess of Weimar told Lord Howe that the Queen was smiling in her sleep.

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